

Ancient Indian Cosmogony

F. B. J. KUIPER

Essays selected and introduced by

JOHN IRWIN



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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

F.B.J. Kuiper was until 1972 professor of Sanskrit at the University of Leiden, where his main work had been in philology.¹ However, he has been heard to say that from an early stage in his career he was conscious of the competing demands of two prime interests: comparative linguistics, on the one hand, and early religion, on the other. It is rare indeed to find in the same person the talents required to make a first-class linguist and to explore in depth the nature of religious myth; yet, as the reader will quickly discover, Kuiper commands both fields with impressive mastery. This very fact places him in a category rather apart from most historians of religion, who are primarily concerned with the evolution of religious ideas. Kuiper is more especially interested in the meaning of ancient religion as revealed by the internal structure of its myths, to which language is an important key.

The myths with which Kuiper is especially concerned are those relating to the origin of the universe. 'Cosmogony'—the term applied in academic circles to this class of myth—derives its terminal from Greek, *gonia*, implying 'birth' or 'generation' of the cosmos. This distinguishes it from the better-known term 'cosmology' which is concerned with theories of the universe as an already existing, ordered whole. In the earlier stages of religion, it was 'cosmogony' rather than 'cosmology' that dominated man's ideas about the world. It is perhaps symptomatic of the relative backwardness of Indian studies in this particular field that, although much has been written about Indian cosmology, this appears as the first book devoted specifically to the ancient Indian cosmogony.

For those new to the subject, it should perhaps be stressed that the ancient world's obsessive concern with how the world began had nothing to do with curiosity or the love of story-telling. It was the expression of a religious Mystery, based on an urgently felt need to get into right relationship with the sacred world as source of cosmic order, upon which early man felt his existence and survival to depend. Since it was also based on a conception of Time as cyclic, the birth of the cosmos was felt to be the key to the perpetuation of

¹ For a bibliography of Kuiper's publications up to 1967, see *Pratidānam, studies presented to F.B.J. Kuiper on his 60th birthday*, edited by J.C. Heesterman and others, The Hague, 1968.

life expressed in the return of the sun, the seasons, and the germination of seed.

In short, it provided the sacred model of all *re-generation*, and repetition and renewal were of its essence. This in turn called for ritual re-enactment of the cosmogony at each moment of crisis if the world was not to slip back from Order into Chaos. In India, as in many other traditions, all Time was felt to be encompassed within the Year; hence the supreme moment of crisis was the changeover from the old to the new year. However, celebration of the New Year was not always or necessarily calendric; it was commonly associated with the harvest-cycle, so that there could be several New Year celebrations within one year, varying from region to region. The only feature common to every New Year festival was that it was in some form a ritual re-enactment of the cosmic start when heaven and earth were separated, and our organized universe with its countless other dualisms (gods and demons, fire and water, male and female, light and darkness, and so on) were brought into being. There is no reason to suppose that there was any difference among the archaic cultures as far as the basic pattern of the cosmogony was concerned: indeed, as more evidence becomes available, it becomes increasingly clear that it was the common property of the whole of the known ancient world.

To understand the place and the nature of cosmogonic myth in archaic cultures, we have to counter the influence of the Greeks. By secularising mythology and turning it into literature, the Greeks did much to obscure its original function and meaning. The description 'Creation Story' should not be allowed to detract from its original nature as religious Mystery, communicated in metaphor. Moreover, in most cultures, the creation of the world was thought of as too mysterious a business to be explained in any one way. In so far as the cosmogonies do get transformed into stories or legends (and one thinks here, too, of the countless transformations in the Hindu epics and *Purāṇas*) they have already lost something of their character as Mysteries. By the same logic, the Westerner has to counter the influence of the Bible—especially the Book of Genesis as translated by those who could have had little knowledge of the original connotation of the words. For instance, we can be certain that the original author could not have meant 'create' in the sense of creating something out of nothing; rather, he would have meant the shaping or moulding of what was already in existence.

In the Vedic context, Kuiper describes the cosmogony as an evolution in the strictly etymological (non-Darwinian) sense of that word, from Latin *e+volvere*, which means a 'rolling out' or 'unfolding'. Indra's rôle in the *R̥gveda* was not, he says, to create the world out of nothing but to act as 'a kind of magnetic force' over the primordial world of chaos. By this means, Indra caused the undifferentiated powers and entities of that world to form into two poles of existence, constituting the dualities described above.

Like all new thinking, Kuiper's essays demand effort from the reader; yet, as the first essay shows, he also reveals himself as a master of clear exposition,

which should encourage the reader to persevere. What may be helpful at this point is something about the genesis of his thinking in relation to the Dutch background and what is sometimes called the 'Leiden school' (a term permissible only if we use a small 's', since it never had any statutory existence).

There is no doubt that to anybody interested in the religions of the ancient world, the intellectual climate at Leiden University in the 1920s and 30s was highly creative and stimulating. First and foremost was the figure of William Brede Kristensen (1867-1953) whom Kuiper has described as 'the Nestor of Dutch historians of religion'. A Norwegian by birth, Kristensen succeeded C.P. Tiele as professor of Comparative Religion—a term Kristensen himself preferred to avoid, because in current usage it often implied division between 'higher' and 'lower' religions which he regarded as false. Likewise, Kristensen disassociated himself from the evolutionary approach then fashionable under the leadership of Rudolf Otto's *Idea of the Holy*. In the latter case, he thought, a purely philosophical notion of what constituted the 'holy' was being forced upon historical reality. Instead, he set out to understand ancient religions from the angle of the believer, by rediscovering the believer's own terms of reference. This involved him in close analysis of cult as well as doctrine. His special fields were Egypt, Western Asia, and Greece and in each of these areas his work was based on philological knowledge of texts and some acquaintance with archaeology. As far as method was concerned, his closest parallel was the work of his slightly senior English contemporary, Jane Harrison (1850-1934). Kristensen was especially interested in the 'netherworld' aspect of ancient religion, and most of all its relationship to the concept of Resurrection. This may have been one-sided; nevertheless it was a self-chosen limitation and it gave him firm grip of the material.²

Within the context of the Leiden school, the balance was restored by the much younger cultural anthropologist, J.P.B. de Josselin de Jong (1886-1964) who about 1926 adopted the structural approach to the study of culture. To him, and to other cultural anthropologists from the time of Hubert and Mauss at the beginning of the century, religion was an aspect of culture. Although de Josselin de Jong published little himself, his thinking was widely disseminated through the work of his students—especially G.J. Held in *The Mahabharata: an ethnological study*, Amsterdam and London, 1935, and G.W. Locher, *The Serpent in Kwakiutl Religion*, Leiden, 1932.³

A third major contribution to religious studies—and especially to cos-

²Kuiper says that he only once attended a lecture by Kristensen ("just for the pleasure of seeing and hearing the grand old man") since he was too occupied with Latin, Greek and comparative linguistics. Not until he was already working in Indonesia (1934-39) did he study Kristensen's classic *Leven uit Dood* in association with the *Rgveda*. This, and all other references to Kuiper's views where not attributed to a source, are based on personal discussion or correspondence.

³For further discussion of the 'Leiden school' of anthropologists, see Rodney Needham in his introduction to Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss, *Primitive Classification*, University of Chicago Press, 1963, pp. XXX ff.

mogonic myth—came from A.J. Wensinck, who was the University's professor of Semitic Philology. His important works included *The Ideas of the Western Semites Concerning the Navel of the Earth*, 1916; *The Ocean in the Literature of the Western Semites*, 1918, and *The Tree and Bird as Cosmological Symbols in Western Asia*, 1921—all published in the Transactions of the Dutch Royal Academy of Science (Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen), Amsterdam.⁴ Wensinck's pioneer study of the 'Navel of the Earth' no doubt stimulated Adriaan de Buck in his important doctoral thesis on the Primordial Mound (*oerheuvel*) in ancient Egyptian religion.⁵ Later, de Buck was appointed first Leiden professor of Egyptology. Kuiper says he became acquainted with de Buck's ideas through the latter's student, B.H. Stricker, who was only a few years his junior but whom he did not meet until World War II or shortly after. Stricker then gave Kuiper an off-print of one of his articles which (he says) impressed him 'as a revelation'. Soon after this, Stricker won international recognition as an Egyptologist.

Having taken his doctor's degree in 1934 on a subject of comparative linguistics, Kuiper then went to Indonesia to teach Latin and Greek. "It was from those years (1934-39)," he writes, "that I started working as an Indologist, and as far as my duties allowed I concentrated on study of the *R̥gveda*. Oldenberg's *Religion des Veda* left me with the conviction that that book—although the work of a master of Vedic philology—clearly failed to grasp the essence of Vedic religion. In view of the limitations of the 19th-century attitude to religion, one could hardly have expected otherwise. Although beginning my own studies from scratch, I took as my first guides the dissertations of G.W. Locher and G.J. Held [see para. 2, p. 3], both of whom had been my fellow students. Locher took his Ph.D shortly before I went to Indonesia; Held, one or two years later. Both of them I had known personally, and with Held in particular I had had several talks on his work before I left; and in Jakarta we met again. I missed the training of an anthropologist, and theories on kinship were beyond me: I regret that I have never been able or energetic enough to make up for it. On the other hand, I had a strong feeling that the claim of anthropologists that religion is a projection of the social order, is unfounded. I felt intuitively that what was needed was a combination of Kristensen's method and example with the rigid structural approach of anthropologists. During the war years the University of Leiden was closed by the Germans, but after the war when I came to know the academic world better, I was dismayed at seeing how the younger generation of historians of religion, on

⁴Special mention should perhaps also be made of Wensinck's article, "The Semitic New Year and the Origin of Eschatology," published in *Acta Orientalia*, I, 1923, pp. 158-99. In this article he demonstrated links between Babylonian cosmogonic texts and celebrations of the New Year. Later, Kuiper was first to suggest that the *R̥gveda* was in essence "a textbook for the ceremonies of the New Year festival".

⁵Adriaan de Buck, *De Egyptische voorstellingen betreffende den oerheuvel*, thesis published in facsimile by Eduard Ijdo, Leiden, 1922.

the one hand, and the cultural anthropologists, on the other, lived in closed compartments. It seemed to me that each was working with his own methods and presuppositions while ignoring what was being done in neighbouring fields."

Kuiper's review of F.D.K. Bosch's *The Golden Germ* (published here in English translation for the first time, pp. 23) shows that by 1951 he had accepted the structural approach to the study of religion while at the same time disassociating himself from the anthropologists' claim of 'the primacy of society in classification'.⁶

The book to which Kuiper owed most of all in the crystallization of his thinking was Hans Schärer's *Die Gottesidee der Ngadju Dajak in Süd-Borneo*, first published in German at Leiden in 1946, and re-issued in English translation by Rodney Needham under the title *Ngaju Religion: The Conception of God among the North Borneo People* (The Hague, 1963). This work had been written as a doctoral thesis under de Josselin de Jong, although kinship analysis played no part in it: it was wholly concerned with reconstruction of the Dyak's 'theological system'.

This sums up the Leiden background against which Kuiper's new interpretation of the *R̥gveda* slowly took shape. Addressing himself now to the basic question of what constituted the special character of the *R̥gveda*, Kuiper was especially conscious of what he calls "the curious one-sidedness of the hymns". Prior to this, scholars had evaded this problem. Looking at the history of religion from an evolutionary (Darwinian) point of view, which presupposed an almost obligatory progression from 'primitive' to 'advanced', they based their analyses of the *R̥gveda* on the fact of its being chronologically the oldest document; and since religion in its 'primitive' stages was thought to have been concerned with worship of 'natural forces', Indra's fight with the demon Vṛtra was interpreted as a nature myth concerned with thunderclouds and rain. Against this, Kuiper arrived at his view that Indra's fight was a Creation myth, and that the dualism of Deva and Asura was fundamental to its structure.

It is not necessary to give here an outline of the Vedic cosmogony as it eventually took shape in Kuiper's thinking, because this difficult task has been achieved with masterly clarity in the first essay entitled "The Basic Concept of Vedic Religion". Although it is among the last to have been written, we have given it first place because it is the logical starting-point for readers coming afresh to the subject.

Looking back in retrospect, it is interesting to see that although Kuiper carried the subject much further than anyone else, a number of other scholars had been moving independently towards cosmogonic identification of the Indra-Vṛtra myth at the same period—yet unknown to one another because of isolation forced upon them by World War II. Especially notable for their

⁶Words quoted from Rodney Needham (see fn. 3).

work in this direction were W. Norman Brown in America and Heinrich Lüders in Germany. As it happened, neither of these scholars had influenced Kuiper in the genesis of his own thinking. Although Norman Brown was first in print on the subject in an article he contributed to the *Journal of the American Oriental Society* in 1942,⁷ this journal was not available in wartime Holland and did not come to Kuiper's notice until several years after the war. In the case of Lüders, there was likewise a long delay; and when in 1952 the first part of his life-work, *Varuṇa*,⁸ was posthumously published, it became clear that his ideas on Indra had passed through several stages. Although he had finally arrived at recognition of some basic elements of the cosmogony, one is left with the impression that his theory of the celestial ocean had for long been a barrier in the way of correct interpretation. His final insights can only be guessed from the fragments that Alsdorf as editor of the posthumous volumes has so painstakingly put together.

Kuiper has remarked that 1949 was a key stage in the development of his own thinking, because it was then that he had first understood the purport of the difficult hymn X. 124 (although his interpretation was not explicitly presented until thirty years later, in his most recent major work, *Varuṇa and Vidūṣaka*, Amsterdam, 1979). However, others may claim that his most important single advance had been made in 1946 with his recognition that Vṛtra's 'hill' or 'rock' was none other than the *oerhevel* or 'Primordial Mound',⁹ which some of us have now come to regard as the most important of all images in the early history of religion and art. This identification appeared in a book review written in Dutch, and in view of its importance as a landmark in Indian cosmogonic research, the relevant passage is here given for the first time in English.

In my opinion, any attempt to explain Vṛtra should start from the equivalence of Vṛtra and Vala and place them in the total mythological concept of the world. Then, I think, it will be clear (what can only be pointed at here) that the myth takes us back to that stage of the creation when there was not yet a heaven, and the *amṛta* tree (*Rgveda* I. 164. 20ff.) did not yet grow up to heaven, and the gods consequently did not yet have the *amṛta/soma* at their disposal, as it was still guarded, together with all the goods of life (such as water=*rasa*, the essence of life; and sun=the light of life and the worlds) in the primordial hill by the serpent. . . . The fact that Indra wins them and makes the sun rise is his great creative act, which is repeated

⁷ W. Norman Brown, "The Creation Myth of the Rīg-veda," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 62, 1942, pp. 85-98. Recently re-published in *India and Indology, Selected Articles by W. Norman Brown*, edited by Rosane Rocher, Banaras, 1978, pp. 20ff.

⁸ Heinrich Lüders, *Varuṇa, aus dem Nachlass herausgegeben von Ludwig Alsdorf*, two volumes, Göttingen, 1951, and 1959.

⁹ Kuiper uses the traditional English rendering, 'Primordial Hill'. He does not exclude 'Mound' as an appropriate alternative, but he does not share the editor's preference for the latter, leaving open the choice between 'hill' and 'mound'.

every morning and causes a new crisis every year at the winter solstice. Therefore, Hillebrandt may be right when he puts Indra's act (*Ved. Myth.*, II. 2. 182 ff.) at the beginning of the *devayana* and also connects Usas with it. In that light a ritual fight during the winter solstice between an Arya and a Śūdra, as representatives of the two cosmic moieties and ending with the sacrificial death of the Śūdra, would indeed be well imaginable as a reiteration of the mythical act."¹⁰

It is in the nature of all creative scholarship that it extends understanding in areas far beyond those with which the author is immediately concerned. In this case one might cite the value these essays will have to students of early art and architecture where cosmogony is now generally recognized as having played a fundamental rôle. Indeed, there is a sense in which the very act of artistic creation—in other words, of fashioning, structuring or giving form to (literally, in-forming) inanimate materials—is a 'creation' in the archaic cosmogonic sense we have been discussing, that is, the bringing to 'life' of materials already existing. It is no surprise, therefore, that the cosmogony was conceived as the sacred model of all artistic creation, and that the building of a temple and the fashioning of a divine image, no less than the poet's struggle for the right word,¹¹ were occasions for ritual re-enactment of the separation of heaven and earth.

The first steps towards recognition of this were already being taken in the 1890s by W.R. Lethaby—an Englishman of quiet genius whose works left no impression on the academic world of his day, but which are now seen as prophetic.¹² Lethaby realized that the building of monuments in the ancient world was first and foremost a rite whereby man sought to identify himself with the source of cosmic order by placing himself at the 'Centre of the Universe', otherwise known as the Navel of the Earth (Sanskrit *prithivīnābhi*, Greek *omphalos*, Hebrew *ṭabbūr ereṣ*, and so on) where the universe was 'born'. Since every spot where man was in contact with the divine shared this mythic location, every shrine stood at the Centre of the Universe. To the rationalistic thinking of the Evolutionists, restricting themselves to principles of empirical science, the very notion that every sanctuary should be conceived as the centre of the world seemed absurd, and under the influence of Darwinian ideas of biological evolution it was all too easy to imagine that the history of religion, too, had involved progression from 'primitive' to 'advanced'.

¹⁰From Kuiper's review of Leo Buschardt, *Vṛtra, Det rituelle Daemondrab i den Vediske Somakult*, Copenhagen, 1945. The review was published in *Museum, Maandblad voor Philologie en Geschiedenis*, no. 52, 1947, columns 198-200.

¹¹Besides the several examples given in these essays, see also Jan Gonda, "A Note on the Vedic Student's Staff," *Journal of the Oriental Institute*, University of Baroda, vol. 14, 1964-65, pp. 262-72.

¹²W.R. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, London, 1891 (reissued by the Architectural Press Ltd., London, 1974). Of this remarkably lucid book, the *Times* reviewer wrote when it came out that "the author's insight is so esoteric that to plain people its deliverances are simply unintelligible" (*The Times*, 31 December 1891).

Hence, the notion of every sanctuary existing at the Centre of the Universe was seen as another instance of the 'childishness' of early religions. Against this, Lethaby recognized that even more absurd in the situation was application of the reductive logic of empirical science where it had no relevance. In other words, it was obvious to Lethaby that the ancient notion of sacred space and location had nothing to do with the profane science of geometry but answered to an entirely different set of ideas. With this recognition was linked the discovery that in the ancient world the shrine was a point of passage between the human and divine worlds.

Already by the 1920s and 30s there were a number of archaeologists and art historians thinking on these lines, and it is significant that they were all orientalists. Especially notable among them were A.M. Hocart (who for a short time had been Archaeological Commissioner in Sri Lanka); Paul Mus, author of a monumental work on Borobudur, but whose main experience had been in Indo-China; the German archaeologist Walter Andrae, specializing in Western Asia, and the Belgian Carl Hentze who was a Sinologist. The first to apply these ideas to the study of Indian monuments was A.K. Coomaraswamy. After World War II, fresh impetus was given by Stella Kramrisch, in *The Hindu Temple* (1946), and F.D.K. Bosch, in *The Golden Germ* (originally published in Dutch in 1948, and re-issued in English translation in 1960). Special mention might also be made of two remarkable papers which appeared within the first post-war decade: one was by A.K. Coomaraswamy, "The Hindu Temple," published in the same year as his death;¹³ and the other by Mircea Eliade, "Centre du Monde, Temple, Maison," issued in 1957.¹⁴ During the interval of eight years between the publication of these two seminal papers, we can see now that there had been an important theoretical advance. Whereas previously the temple as "architectural microcosm" had been thought of as an "image of the universe," this definition was seen to have embodied only part of the truth. Only with the publication of Eliade's essay was it made clear for everybody that a microcosm was not so much an "image of the universe" as an image of the *creation* of the universe. In other words, it must be seen as a *dynamic* image, not a static one. It implies not so much a plan or a formula, but a *process*. It is precisely this dynamic aspect that Kuiper's studies so brilliantly illustrate. Many of its features recur in other cultures, and since in the total picture the Indian cosmogony turns out to be one of the earliest comprehensively understood, its importance to the student of the origins of human culture can hardly be overestimated.

1980

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¹³ Recently republished in *A.K. Coomaraswamy, Selected Papers*, edited by Roger Lipsey, vol. I.

¹⁴ Originally delivered at an international conference arranged under the title, *Le Symbolisme cosmique des Monuments religieux*, held in 1955 at the Istituto Italiano Per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, Rome, and published in the *Proceedings, Serie Orientale Roma*, vol. XIV, 1957, pp. 57-82.

1. THE BASIC CONCEPT OF VEDIC RELIGION

I

The basic concept of Vedic religion is no doubt an unusual object of study, as it implies at least three assumptions: first, that the time has come for a more general survey of this religion; second, that there actually does exist a basic concept; and third, that something sensible can be said about it. Each of these assumptions will perhaps be questioned. The following study will show how I think it has become possible in the present state of Vedic studies to discuss the underlying idea of Vedic theology.¹

II

The key to an insight into this religion is, I think, to be found in its cosmogony, that is, the myth which tells us how, in primordial time, this world came into existence. This myth owed its fundamental importance to the fact that every decisive moment in life was considered a repetition of the primeval process. Therefore the myth was not merely a tale of things that had happened long ago,

¹ This is the text of a lecture given to an audience with no previous knowledge of Vedic religion. This explains why the concentration on the main lines has sometimes led to some simplification in the presentation of the facts. Thus, for the sake of clearness only Varuṇa is mentioned because the other Ādityas were not relevant in this context. Oversimplification will, I think, only be found at the end, where the status of the gods of totality could best be illustrated by Viṣṇu. The lecture is here reproduced without material changes because it seems the best form in which to summarize what I think Vedic religion was basically about. It is based on a study which will be published elsewhere. Therefore, only a few references have been added in footnotes.

nor was it a rational explanation of how this world had become what it is now. The origin of the world constituted the sacred prototype of how, in an endlessly repeated process, life and this world renewed themselves again and again.

To this aspect of the myth, however, we shall have to return later on. Let us, for the present moment, see what the myth tells us about the origin of the world.

In the beginning there was only water, but these so-called primeval waters bore in themselves the germ of life.² From the bottom a small clod of earth rose to the surface, where it floated about. The clod spread on the surface and became a mountain, the beginning of the earth, but it continued to float on the waters.³ There is a variant version in which the highest god, the World Father, drifted about, but the presence or absence of this god is only of marginal importance. The primordial world itself was sacred, and for the process of this genesis to take place there was no need of a creator. Things were considered to exist, somehow, in their own right. In this first stage, however, as represented by the mountain, the world was still an undifferentiated unity. The poets sometimes speak of a darkness as the initial state, but this is clearly a mere attempt to express what could not properly be expressed in words. None of the contrasts which constitute our phenomenal world yet existed. There was no heaven or earth, no day or night, no light or, properly speaking, darkness.

Nor did that contrast yet exist in which for archaic man the cosmic dualism manifested itself most clearly in human life, namely, the all-pervading contrast between man and woman, male and female. Hence it is that the myth, at this stage of the genesis, sometimes refers to bisexual primeval beings to whom others owe their existence. In mixing up the roles of father and mother the myth is, indeed, consistent and, in its own way, logical. A special group of gods, the Asuras, was connected with this first stage. Their great importance will become clear later on.

It is obvious that this first stage of the cosmogony is not a creation myth at all. There were in the beginning already certain things the existence of which was taken for granted, as a last irreducible fact. The first Vedic thinkers who have left a trace in the *Rigveda* were well aware of these bounds set to their specula-

² *Āpah*. See Sylvain Lévi, *La doctrine du sacrifice dans les brâhmanas* (Paris, 1898), pp. 13, n. 3; 159, n. 3. Compare, e.g., *India Maior*, Congratulatory Volume Gonda (Leiden, 1972), p. 145, n. 1; F. B. J. Kuiper, "Cosmogony and Conception: A Query," *History of Religions* 10 (1970):99.

³ For references see, e.g., Kuiper, pp. 100 ff., 109-10.

tions. The last words of a philosophical hymn are: "Whence this creation came into existence . . . that only the Supervisor of this world knows—or perhaps not even He."⁴

III

This state of undifferentiated unity came to a sudden end by the second stage of the cosmogony. It started with the birth of the god Indra, outside the primeval world. It is not said whence he came, nor could the texts have been more specific on this point as it was apparently part of his character that he came "from nowhere."⁵ Indra's mythical function is limited to promoting the emergence of a dual world of individualized forms from the undifferentiated chaos. Again, Indra is not a creator in the Old Testamentary sense of the word, and there are even versions which describe the process as due to some internal forces, without the intervention of the god at all. His exploit, which we shall have to consider more closely, can best be defined as a demiurgic act. He starts a process in the primeval world of unformed matter, a process owing to which a world of mere potentiality became the world of reality, in which light has arisen and forms a contrast with darkness, in which life exists along with death, and in which good is counterbalanced by evil. Indra does not create anything but rather acts as a kind of magnetic force which, as one text says, causes all powers, all entities in the world, to side with one of the two poles of existence.⁶ One might perhaps call the process an evolution, in the strictly etymological sense of the word. Anyway, if one refers to this myth as a creation myth (as I prefer to do), it should be borne in mind that the word is here used in a very indirect way.

As for the *Rigveda*, it is for special reasons only concerned with this second stage of the genesis of the world. From the stray references in the hymns the following picture can be reconstructed.

Indra's demiurgic act appears to consist of two different parts, which concern the primeval hill and the tree of life, respectively. Let us first look at the former. The hill, which is still floating on the primeval waters, has to be riveted to the bottom, and to be opened. There is, however, a strong force of resistance in this

⁴ *Rigveda* X. 129. 7.

⁵ On the uncertainty about Indra's origin, see *Rigveda* II. 12. 5 (*kūha sēti*), X. 73, 10.

⁶ *Baudhāyana Śrautasūtra* XVIII. 46 (p. 401, line 11): "When the Devas and Asuras were waging the Great War, all these beings split into two groups; some went to the Devas, others to the Asuras."

mountain, and so Indra's heroic fight, although sometimes described as being directed against the mountain, is more often directed against that force, which is denoted by the word *vṛtra*. *Vṛtra* means "obstruction, resistance." In the myth the power of resistance is personified by a dragon, and Indra must accordingly, like Saint George and other mythological heroes, slay the dragon. It should not be forgotten, however, that this dragon, which itself came to be called *Vṛtra*, only represents a special aspect of the primeval mountain, a resistance which Indra had to overcome in order to split open the hill. In this fight Indra is victorious. He slays the dragon, and from the hill, opened by force, life bursts forth under its two aspects of water and fire. In the creation myth the water is represented by four rivers, which stream from the top of the mountain in four different directions, and the fire by the sun which rises from the mountain or the waters. At the same time the mountain is no longer floating about. It has now found a support (as the texts say)⁷ and starts growing on all sides, until it has the expanse of the earth. Still, the primeval mountain remains the cosmic center and the nail which keeps the earth in its place.

As for the second part of Indra's act, which concerns the tree of life, Indra here functions as a pillar in propping up the sky, which until then had been lying upon the earth. In so doing he creates the duality of heaven and earth. From a mythological point of view this is not a separate event, because the contrast between heaven and earth is only one particular aspect of the all-pervading dualism. Thus, with the sun rising to the sky, the contrast between light and darkness is born, which is parallel to that between life and death.

Indra's mythical role remains limited to this single exploit. Again and again the poets say that he slew the dragon, extended the earth, and lifted up the sky, but that is about all they can tell us about him. There is, however, one particularly interesting detail in his creation act, and here we return to his connection with the world tree. This tree belonged to the dual cosmos, since it was identical with the cosmic pillar which, in the center of the world, kept heaven and earth apart. It must accordingly have arisen when the sky was separated from the earth. The obvious conclusion is that Indra, *at the moment* when he "propped up" the sky, must have been identical with the tree. On the other hand, there are sufficient indications to show that *in general* Indra has nothing to

⁷ On *pratiṣṭhā*, see, in general, Kuiper, pp. 109-10.

do with the cosmic tree and the world center. His identity with the pillar at the moment of creation, when he himself literally *was* the world axis, must accordingly have had a momentary character. This inference is confirmed by data about the Indra festival of much later times. From these we learn that it was then still customary to erect every year, during the New Year's festival,⁸ a pole in honor of Indra. Its most interesting feature is that during the few days that it stood erected and was worshipped, it was considered to be identical with god Indra and was sometimes denoted by his name. This gives a special significance to the fact that after some seven days the pole was pulled down, taken away, and thrown into a river, which would not have been possible unless the function of the god himself, whose name it bore, had for the time being come to an end. This, again, confirms the conclusion drawn from the Vedic evidence that Indra was a seasonal god, whose mythological act consisted in creating and renewing the world and inaugurating a new year.

It does not mean that the god was entirely absent during the rest of the year. Just as it was said that Indra immediately after his birth slew the dragon, so he was present to aid his devotees, whenever they had to overcome inimical forces in various shapes, such as aborigines sheltered in their fortresses or demons of disease. Even the poet craving for inspiration considered his mind a microcosmic replica of the earth resting upon the subterranean ocean, and he prayed to the god to break his inner resistance so that the inspiration could stream forth from the ocean of his heart.⁹

IV

So much for the description of Indra's part in creating this world. It is, however, only one side of the genesis. It seems never to have been recognized that there is a different aspect, which constitutes the very core of the Vedic conception of the world. This is the problem of the Asuras.

As we have seen, the Asuras had been the gods of the primordial world. Since Indra broke its obstructive power, the question naturally arises, What became of them and their world?

As far as their world is concerned, the answer is clear: after the

⁸ See, in general, J. J. Meyer, *Trilogie altindischer Mächte und Feste der Vegetation* (Zürich and Leipzig, 1937), 3:4, 113; and *Mahābhārata* I. 57. 18, *gate saṃvatsare*, "at the end of the year."

⁹ For the breaking of the inner "resistance" (*vrtrá*), see *Indo-Iranian Journal* 8 (1964):125.

powers of life had been set free, the primordial world became the sacred earth, which together with heaven formed a pair of cosmic moieties. But while on the surface of the earth life manifested itself, there was also the subterranean world, with the primeval waters on which the earth was believed to rest. This, too, had come to form part of the organized world after Indra's creation act. As we shall see, however, it had not quite lost its original character and remained an ambiguous element in the creation.

As for the Asuras themselves, they constitute the central problem of Vedic religion. After Indra had created the dual cosmos, the Asuras were no longer the only gods, since the dualism also extended to the world of gods. Along with Indra a new group of gods made their entrance. Their name, *Devas*, was the old Indo-European word for celestial gods. As such, the *Devas* were opposed to the gods of the primordial world, and the fight of Indra, the chief and protagonist of the *Devas*, against the dragon must have been considered to be also directed against the Asuras. Indeed, later Vedic texts no longer refer to Indra's fight but instead always speak of the cosmogonical fight between *Devas* and Asuras. Their enmity had a tragical character because the *Devas* were the younger brothers of the Asuras. That the younger group proved superior to the older is a pattern not unknown in systems of social organization.

After Indra had slain the dragon, which signals the defeat of the Asuras, the two parties of *Devas* and Asuras had to come to terms with each other. What then happens is the most momentous event in the whole cosmogony. It appears impossible to incorporate all the Asuras in the ordered cosmos. Only some of the chief Asuras, such as their king *Varuṇa*, go over to the other party and side with the *Devas*. The rest of them, however, are driven away from the earth and take refuge in the nether world. (See fig. 1.) We owe it to the very archaic character of the *Rigveda* that a direct and clear trace of this split within the group of Asuras has been preserved. In this oldest text a distinction was still made between *devāv āsurā*, "Asuras who have become *Devas*," and, on the other hand, *āsurā ādevāḥ*, "Asuras who are not *Devas*." This fact had already attracted the attention of a discerning scholar in the nineteenth century,¹⁰ but since the true nature of the Asuras, as far as I can see, was and has ever since been misunderstood, it was impossible to appreciate the implications of this distinction. Only

¹⁰ See P. von Bradke, *Dyāus Asura, Ahura Mazdā und die Asuras* (Halle, 1885), *passim*.

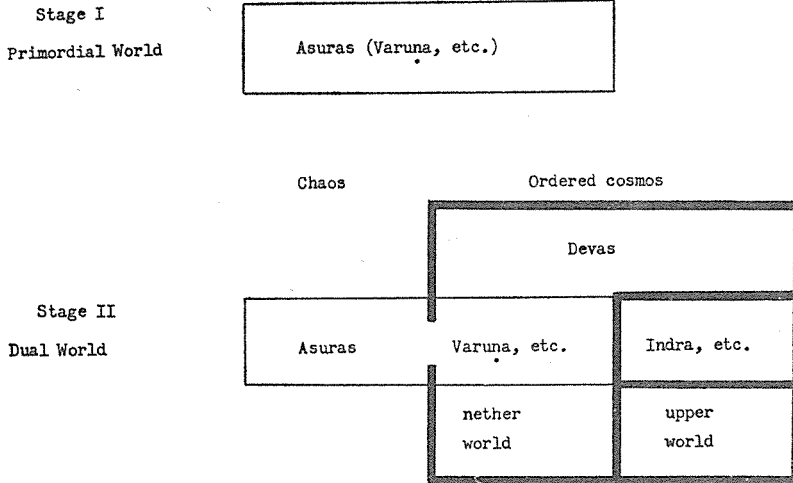


FIG. 1

in the light of the cosmogony its full relevance becomes clear. Although the original nature of the Asuras had already been recognized without the help of these Rigvedic data, they are, as a confirmation of the correctness of this reconstruction, welcome and valuable.

I used the word "reconstruction" because in later Vedic texts it is hard to find any direct trace of the situation which I have sketched here. Never again is Varuṇa called an Asura. This term is henceforth reserved for the banished demons, whose cosmogonical fight with the Devas is constantly referred to in this literature. Varuṇa, however, had become a Deva, no less respectable than Indra and the others, although still marked by certain inauspicious features. Only a more profound study discloses that Varuṇa, although his title of Asura had long since been tabooed, continued to be much more ambiguous than is usually realized. If, however, Varuṇa's character has to a large extent been misinterpreted, this is not due to a lack of interest on the part of students of Vedic religion. Far more studies have in the last few decades been devoted to him than, for instance, to Indra, and he has recently been characterized—and rightly so—as the neuralgic point in Vedic studies.¹¹

¹¹ See Louis Renou, in *Festschrift für Herman Lommel* (Wiesbaden, 1960), p. 122: "le point névralgique des études védiques."

For that reason the figure of Varuṇa must, even in the framework of these sketchy outlines, occupy us somewhat longer than Indra.

First, it must be remarked that Varuṇa's transition to the Devas is not an isolated phenomenon. It rather reflects a stereotyped pattern. In this connection it may not be superfluous to warn against the current misconception that the Asuras as so-called demons impersonated evil. It should not be forgotten that their world is one of unformed, potential life—the material out of which the cosmos is shaped. The Asuras are not fallen angels but potential gods. Sometimes it is related that an Asura of his own accord leaves his world and sides with the Devas. In other cases he is "called forth" (as the texts say) by the Devas, who are unable to achieve their aim without the assistance of a certain Asura. The myth here clearly points to bounds which are set to the powers of the ordered world.

Second, when Varuṇa is willing to become a Deva, Indra offers him a rulership.¹² Seemingly—and this is the current interpretation—Varuṇa is here enticed by the promise of sovereignty. What in fact is meant is that Varuṇa becomes "lord of the waters," his traditional title until much later times. Then, however, the true meaning of this function was no longer known, as the term was mostly interpreted as "lord of the ocean." There can be little doubt that the original meaning was quite different. In the Veda the term "the waters" denoted, first and foremost, the primeval waters upon which the earth rested, and it can be proved that it was of these waters that Varuṇa became the ruler. Even after his incorporation in the ordered cosmos, accordingly, Varuṇa had a function which corresponded to his origin as god of the primordial world. From now on he resided in the netherworld, at the roots of the world tree and near to (or in) the subterranean cosmic waters.¹³

Third, the difficulties which Varuṇa has presented to modern research are, it seems, largely due to vain attempts to describe in rational, noncontradictory terms a god whose very characteristic is his ambiguity. His inner contradictions, indeed, defy any attempt at a strictly logical definition.

An illustration of his basically ambiguous character can be found in his relation to the banished Asuras, his former brothers. As we have seen, all the Asuras who were not integrated in the organized world fled to the netherworld, accordingly to the same world

¹² *Rigveda* X. 124. 5.

¹³ See, e.g., *Indo-Iranian Journal* 8 (1964):107 ff.; and *India Maior*, pp. 150–51.

where Varuṇa resided. The Vedic texts omit, purposely I think, to mention this fact, but the question inevitably arises of what kind of relation there was between Varuṇa and the Asuras.

The answer to this question is given in the much later *Mahābhārata*. In some passages it describes in an ingenuous way Varuṇa as seated in his subterranean palace, surrounded by Asuras as attendants.¹⁴ What exactly the authors of these passages may have thought when composing these lines, is hard to say; but it is obvious that others must have felt shocked by this intimacy between a respected Deva and the Asuras, and since the latter were there and could not be done away with, they made Varuṇa a jailer, who had to watch the fettered Asuras.¹⁵

The truth of the story clearly was, although this is never overtly stated, that Varuṇa, even after he had become a Deva, continued to entertain secret relations with his banished brothers. It reminds us of a Vedic tale about a priest who publicly officiated for the Devas but secretly was the priest of the Asuras.¹⁶

V

I now come to the main point of this mythology. The Asuras had been driven away but not annihilated. They were not part of the cosmos but continued to exist beyond the pale, as a constant menace to the existence and coherence of the ordered world.

One need not be a psychologist to presume that their banishment may have meant, in Freudian terminology, a repression and that, if repression there was, the inevitable consequence must have been anguish on the part of the cosmos. This conclusion would, however, ignore the fact that their banishment was only temporary. At certain intervals—I think the Rīgvedic evidence allows us to say: at the beginning of every new year—the war between Asuras and Devas was renewed. On the social level it was reenacted by contests, which may be interpreted as reiterations of the cosmic strife and as a ritualization of human aggressiveness.

¹⁴ Also in the *Mahābhārata*, Varuṇa is located in the netherworld; see III. 160. 10; V. 96. 5; and V. 106. 12. For the Asuras attending him, see II. 9. 15–17. Varuṇa rules over them and protects them; cf. VIII. 45. 32, Bombay ed., *pālayann asurān* (against 30. 77, critical ed.), and XII. 4497, Calcutta ed., *apām rāṇye 'surānām ca . . . prabhūm* (against XII. 122. 29, critical ed.). Although it cannot be proved that these are the authentic readings, the occurrence of variant readings may in these cases be significant.

¹⁵ Varuṇa's world is a refuge for Vṛtra's allies; see III. 98. 3, 99. 21, 100. 1, 101. 7 ff. (cf. I. 17. 28). Varuṇa is the jailer of the fettered Asuras; see V. 126. 44 ff.; III. 42. 6, 27–28. Cf. I. 19. 6, *asurānām ca bandhanam* (said of the ocean).

¹⁶ For the tale of Viśvarūpa, see *Taittirīya Samhitā* II. 5. 1; and *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* II. 153–57.

However, I will limit myself to the theological problems and leave a discussion of the social aspects of these potlatch-like ceremonies to those who are better qualified. In this context I must insert a remark on a point which I will not stress but which cannot be ignored, because it seems obviously to follow as a conclusion from the preceding discussion. This point is Varuṇa's position during the annual period of crisis, which apparently formed a transition to the new year. If at this time the Asuras returned on earth and renewed their war with the Devas and if, at the end of this period, the world order was to be restored again, just as it had been established in the beginning of time, one conclusion would seem inevitable: in that case Varuṇa was during these days once more the adversary of Indra and had to be reconciled again. In other words, his secret conspiracy with the Asuras, traces of which we have found in later literature, must for a short while have turned into an open alliance. The reason why it is no use dwelling on this point is that the *Rigveda* provides no evidence in support of this conclusion. It has been suggested that this is simply due to the circumstance that the majority of the Rigvedic hymns had been composed for New Year ceremonies, during which Varuṇa was particularly inauspicious and dangerous. This would explain why all that concerned Varuṇa's darker aspects was tabooed in these hymns. Although I believe that this is materially true, it is clear that intentional reticence can seldom be proved and that there is no point in arguing about things which are not explicitly said.

I now return to the problem of the banished Asuras. Rather than indulging in psychological speculations of our own making, we can state the basic problems of Vedic religion in terms which the poets themselves used.

They had, indeed, two words which perfectly well expressed their reflections on existence. One word is *sát*, literally "being, that which is." It is used with reference to the phenomenal world, the ordered cosmos. Its opposite is *ásat* "the nonbeing," which denotes the world of unformed matter, the undifferentiated state. The cosmogonic myth describes their relation as one of successive states in such phrases as "In the first period of the Devas *sát* was born of *ásat*,"¹⁷ or, "The seers, searching with insight in their hearts, found the origin of *sát* in *ásat*."¹⁸

¹⁷ *Rigveda* X. 72. 2. The creation and every renewal of the world must have been regarded as a process of shaping the unformed, which made the assistance of the Asuras indispensable.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, X. 129. 4, *sato bándhum ásati nṛ avindan*.

In the light of the interpretation here given, the question might be raised to what extent the Vedic poets were thinking in terms of successive states and how far they were referring to a logical relation, the latter state necessarily presupposing the former. In fact, the word which I translated as "origin" has various connotations and might also be interpreted as "relationship."

Whatever a Vedic poet might have thought of our problems of interpretation, the question would be a legitimate one, for the myth did not merely imply a succession of two different states. As a matter of fact, the emergence of an ordered cosmos did not put an end to the existence of the world of *ásat*. In fact, the problem of the Asuras here recurs clothed in different terms. *Ásat*, the primordial world of chaos, was not entirely replaced by the cosmos but continued to exist on the fringes of this world and as a perpetual menace to the latter's existence.

When I venture to translate this philosophy in more modern terms of my own, I should say that the world order, as the Vedic Indians saw it, was a precarious balance between the powers of cosmos and chaos, and that this world was only part of a much wider universe, which also comprised the nonindividualized world of unformed matter.

VI

The Indian Genesis started with a state described in such phrases as "In the beginning all this was nothing but the waters" and "There was no *ásat* nor *sát*."¹⁹ The next stage was the primordial world of *ásat*. This finally became our world, described as a state of tension and struggle, with the annual intrusion of the repressed *ásat* and the Asuras into the established order, which is the world of *sát* and the Devas.

Still, conflict is not the last word that the Vedic myth has to say about the nature of the universe. I think the following outline is sufficiently well founded to be presented here.

In a philosophical hymn of the *Rigveda* we read the words "*ásat* and *sát* in the highest heaven."²⁰ The term "in the highest heaven" is well known in these hymns. It sometimes clearly refers to a place which transcends the dualism of this world, for instance, when Indra is said to hold heaven and earth in the highest heaven. It is no doubt identical with Viṣṇu's third or highest step, which

¹⁹ See the *nāśadāsiya*-hymn, *Rigveda* X. 129. 1, 3.

²⁰ *Rigveda* X. 5. 7, *ásac ca sác ca paramé vyòman dákṣasya jánmann áditer upásthe*.

is hidden from the mortal eye. Many years ago I tried to demonstrate that in the Veda Viṣṇu, far from being a subordinate assistant of Indra, must have been a central figure, of greater importance than Indra himself.²¹ While Viṣṇu's first two steps express his relationship with the two opposed parts of the cosmos, his third step corresponds to a transcendental world in which the two conflicting parties are united in an all-encompassing totality. In this light we can view the poet's words about "*Āsat* and *sāt* in the highest heaven." They point to a world which transcends the cosmic antithesis and in which *sāt* and *āsat* have been reconciled in the synthesis of an all-embracing unity. (See fig. 2.) In this respect Viṣṇu must have been, since the earliest time, a higher god than both Varuṇa and Indra, as he transcended the dualism which they impersonated.²²

The "highest heaven" is a specific term of the poetical language of the *Rigveda*. Later theological texts refer to a "third heaven." Since they never mention a first or a second heaven and since the number three traditionally expresses the concept of totality, there can be no doubt that the terms "highest heaven" and "third heaven" denote the same idea. The concept of a transcendental world explains some difficult problems of Vedic mythology, which are, however, too technical to detain us here.

Rather than dwelling on Viṣṇu's highest heaven in the *Rigveda*, I will conclude with a few words about the development of Indian

²¹ See *Indological Studies in Honor of W. Norman Brown* (New Haven, Conn, 1962), pp. 137-51.

²² As is apparent from fig. 2, there is a double dichotomy: the contrast between *āsat* and *sāt* and, within the ordered cosmos, that between netherworld and upper world. In Vedic texts there is evidence of Viṣṇu representing the totality of the cosmos. If the reconstruction and especially the interpretation of the netherworld as part of the cosmos but somehow related to the world of *āsat* is correct, the question arises of whether Viṣṇu from the outset comprised *sāt* and *āsat*. As for the primordial waters, they were apparently incorporated in the cosmos at the moment of Varuṇa's transition to the Devas, but in the annual periods of crisis, with the return of the powers of chaos, they must again have become the world of *āsat*. At that moment Viṣṇu transcended the dualism of Asuras and Devas (*āsat* and *sāt*), just as he had transcended it in the beginning, when the dual cosmos arose (see n. 21 above). In the later cosmogonical myth of the churning of the ocean, as told in the *Mahābhārata*, Viṣṇu also stands above the two parties of the Asuras and Devas. About the tenth century A.D., when this myth was retold in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, the gods were represented as adoring Viṣṇu in the words "Thou alone art both *sāt* and *āsat*, the dual world and that which transcends dualism" (VIII. 12. 8, *ekas tvam eva sadasad dvayam advayam ca*). Although these quotations refer to the cosmogony, during which Viṣṇu's transcendental aspect must have been particularly manifest, it was an essential part of his nature. As for the parallelism between the "third heaven" and the primordial world in the brāhmaṇas (see, e.g., *Asiatische Studien* 25 (1971): 94), this is due to the fact that in the latter the dualism did not yet exist, while the former had transcended it. Hence it is that the third heaven could be substituted for the primordial world as the place from which Soma was fetched.

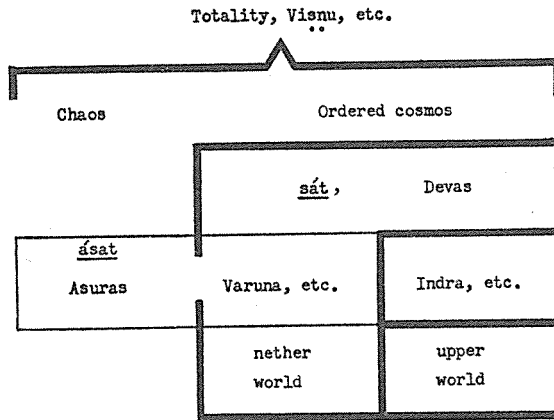


FIG 2

religion in post-Vedic times. No doubt, foreign, non-Aryan religions had a great influence in this period. However, when considered from a general point of view, their influence appears to have been a marginal phenomenon. The basic line of development can best be illustrated by starting from a belief which, although only attested in later sources, may well date from an early period. According to this belief, Viṣṇu is for eight months of every year in the upper world. In this period he takes part, as a Deva, in the processes of the cosmos. In the remaining four months, however, he is in the nether world, where, reclining on the world serpent, he sleeps on the surface of the subterranean waters. Incidentally, there is a close connection between sleep and the netherworld. One has to know this belief, which has survived into modern times, in order to understand how in the classical period this annual process has come to be projected, in gigantic proportions, onto the scale of a world year. Just as in Vedic belief the world was at the end of every year menaced by the intrusion of the powers of chaos, so in this later belief, at the end of a world period, this world is doomed to be annihilated and to return to its primeval state of chaos.

What remains after the world with all its gods has passed away is the cosmic waters and on them, sleeping on his world serpent, god Viṣṇu, who comprises within himself a potential new world with reborn gods.²³

²³ See, e.g., Mārkaṇḍeya's vision, *Mahābhārata* III. 186. 92 ff. The idea that as a result of the return to the undifferentiated state only the waters remain is in conformance with older conceptions. Cf. also, e.g., *Bhāratiya Nāṭyaśāstra* 22 (20). 2 "When Lord Acyuta, after destroying the worlds by his supernatural power and changing the universe into one ocean, lay sleeping on the serpent as his couch. . . ."

In this vision the eternal war between chaos and cosmos has not vanished, but the Vedic notion of periodical fights between Asuras and Devas—and the concomitant ritual of annual contests—has here ceded to the concept of a transcendental harmony—a harmony in which the conflicts and antagonisms of our existence have been reconciled in the figure of one God who survives all vicissitudes of a transient world.

2. THE GOLDEN GERM

In his magnum opus *The Golden Germ, An Introduction to Indian Symbolism*,* F.D.K. Bosch has presented us with the ripe fruit of a long life devoted to the art and culture of ancient India and Indonesia. Like a veritable *kalpataru* he here pours out the results of a research that is as original as it is fascinating. Any attempt to summarize its contents must necessarily confine itself to some outlines and cannot do full justice to the book.

In the introduction the author points out that the task so far fulfilled by Indian archaeology was one of describing and classifying the data. Thereby archaeology is on a par with ethnography and should rather be styled 'archaeography', which would leave the task of a more profound interpretation of the data to a new type of 'archaeology'.

Remarkable transitional forms between the decorative motifs of the *parvan* (the joint in the so-called 'stalk' of the lotus) and the *makara*-head (see figs. i & ii) induced Bosch to identify the arch (*torana*), which often connects two *makara*-heads with the lotus "stalk", and the top-piece in the shape of a *kāla*-head with the lotus "root". Starting from these forms he then formulates his basic hypothesis that, in contrast to Brandes's idea that the vegetal motifs are a stylized development of animal motifs, the lotus vegetation has rather been the origin of this decorative art with all its wealth of variations. Bosch shows, indeed, that the stalk-motif is not only a decorative element, as has generally been supposed, but rather (e.g., in the reliefs of Bharhut and Sanchi) the central symbol, the source of Life which nourishes all that exists, men and animals being represented as connected with it. Bosch then associates this mystical source of Life with the Vedic myth of the golden germ (*hiranyagarbha*), which is born in the waters. Elsewhere, the One to which all beings are attached (accordingly the Cosmic pillar, *stambha*) is said to be erected in this primordial germ. From this Bosch concludes that the golden germ is the

* (Editor's footnote: The English edition of this work appears in *Indo-Iranian Monographs*, Vol. II, published by Mouton, The Hague, 1960. This essay appears here in English for the first time. It is a translation, with only a few minor changes, of a review of the original Dutch edition published under the title *De Gouden Kiem, Inleiding in de Indische Symboliek*, Edition N.V. Uitg. Mij Elsevier, Amsterdam-Brussels, 1948. Page references in this translation refer to the English edition of the book.)

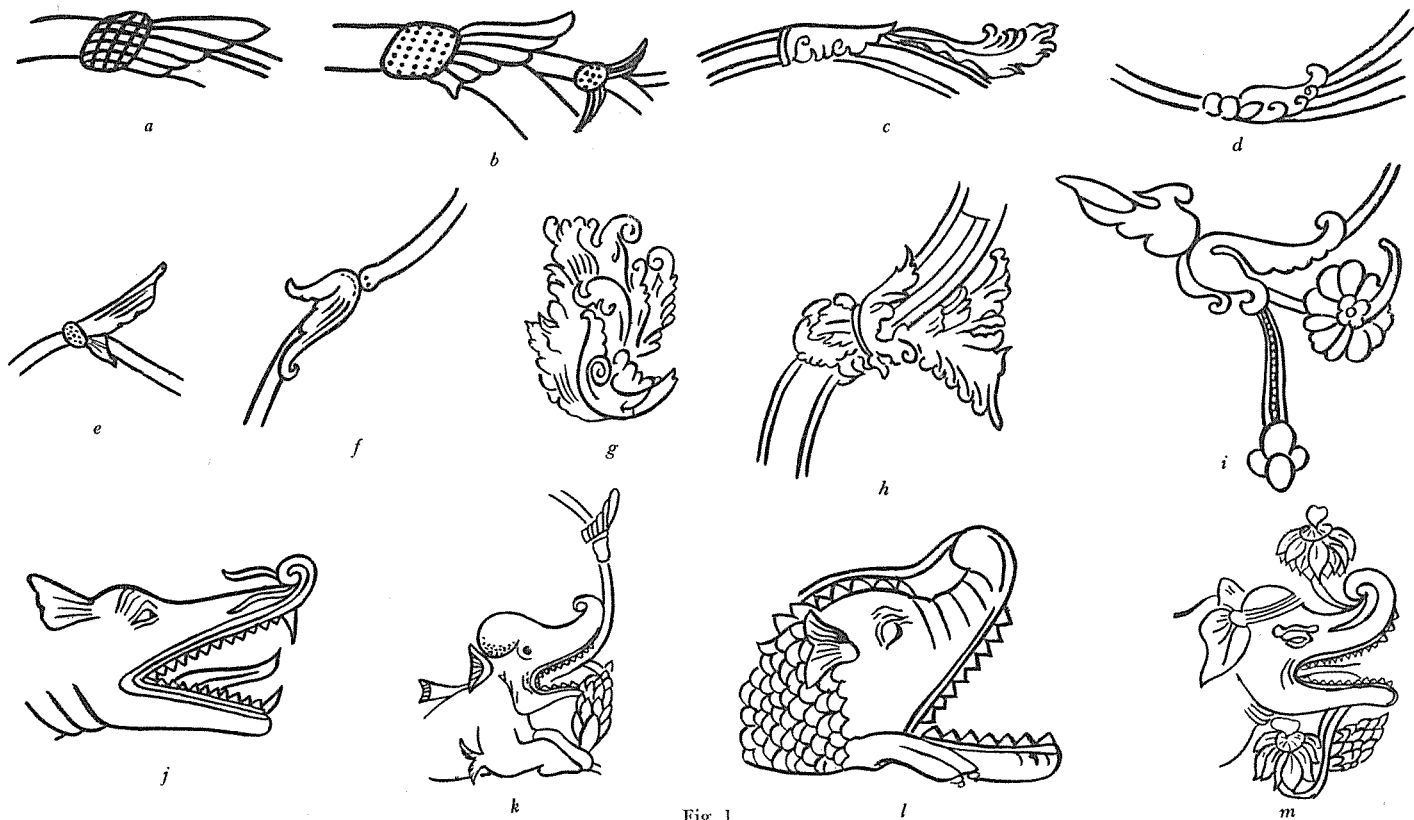


Fig. 1.

Fig. *a* and *b* Bharhut; *c* chaṇḍi Kalasan; *d* Barabudur; *e* Sanchi; *f* Barabudur; *g* and *h* chaṇḍi Kalasan; *i* Barabudur; *j* Bharhut; *k* Sānchi; *l* and *m* Bharhut.

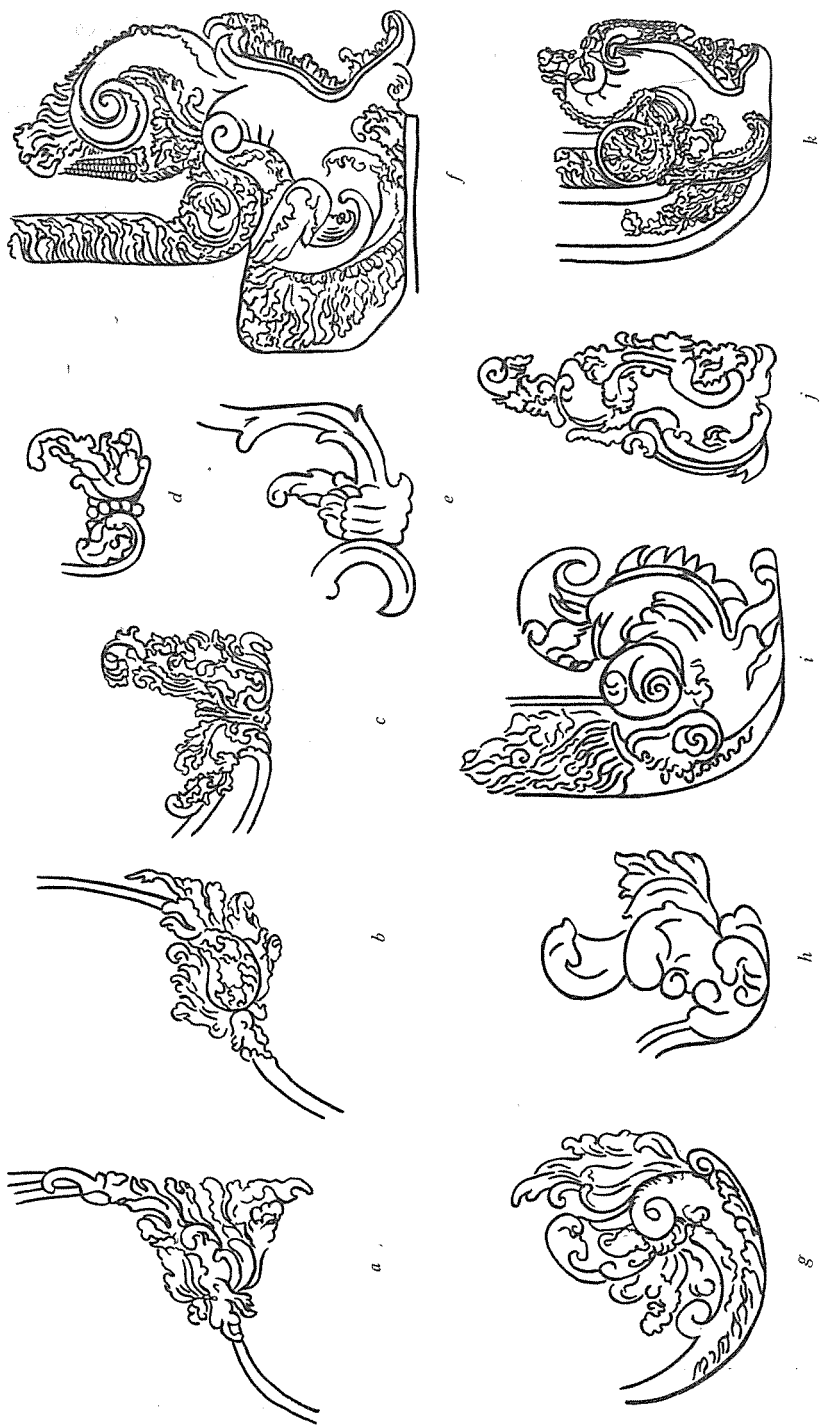


Fig. 2.

Fig. 2 *a-d* Barabudur; *e* bronzelamp coll. Resink-Wilkens; *f* chandi Sewu; *g* and *h* Barabudur; *i* Dieng; *j* chandi Kalasan; *k* Barabudur.

germ of that tree, and with this notion he connects the myths (occurring in much later times) of a lotus which rises from a navel. In this way he finally equates the lotus "root" with *hiranyagarbha*.

On the other hand, however, the myth of the golden germ is unmistakably connected with the mysterious birth of Agni (fire) in the primeval water, whereas the lotus is more directly related to the water of Life. In this germ, accordingly, both elements (which may be called Agni-Soma in accordance with ritual terminology) are contained. This fact Bosch explains by assuming that a male element, a fiery breath of life, has entered the female waters. The equivalent of this breath of life he finds in the ancient Vedic idea that a fig-tree (*aśvattha*) represents the cosmic tree. It is sometimes referred to as an inverted tree. This he explains, mythically, as representing the descent of the breath of life, and naturalistically, as symbolizing the *aśvattha* growing as a parasite on the stems of other trees.

The (non-inverted) fig-tree turns out to be also an ever-recurring motif in this art. Its root is represented as an antefix (which Bosch terms *brahmamūla*), and shows a close resemblance to the lotus-root (*padmamūla*). This antefix, however, is usually itself rooted in the stem of another tree, with a lotus-like vegetation. In the decorative element the two trees, although merged into a unity, can still be clearly distinguished as the components.

The main part of the book deals with the different shapes in which the "stalks", the stem and the *mūlas* can be found in art and in other domains of Indian civilization. Thus the system of classification is derived from the stem of the tree, which as the centre is the fixed landmark of the whole system. On the microcosmic level Bosch finds this basic orientation in the mythic anatomy of the yoga, while macrocosmically, Mount Meru, as a cosmic pivot, is explained as a replica of the *padmamūla*. Many other objects are explained as symbolizing the lotus "root", such as the flower-vase, the "pot-bellied" persons, the conch, the jewel, etc., whereas the *kris* and other objects are interpreted as standing for the stalk or the branch.

Similarly, various solar figures are taken as symbols of the root of the fig tree, while special attention is given to the *gunungan* (*kekajon*) as standing for the stem of the tree. After a study of the stem as represented in the human figure (including the origin of the statue of the Buddha!) a separate chapter is devoted to the cult image as a form of the wishing-tree.¹ In the concluding chapter the author discusses some basic questions, summarising his views on the religious values of tree-symbolism, and offering some surprising new vistas on the literature. For instance, he explains how terms like *parvan* and *kāṇḍa* of the epics, and the typically Indian frame story, the *śravaṇaphala*, are

¹ Here the author puts an end to his argumentation, because somewhere there must be a limit. One would have liked to find here some other manifestations of the tree—for instance, the *jarjara* of the Indian theatre, which was brought on the stage and worshipped, thereby marking the spot as the sacred world (see otherwise Gonda, *Acta Orientalia*, XIX, p. 367 ff.); the *ketu* of the war chariot (cf. *Rgveda* IV. 24. 10), and the pillar of the Vedic house.

rooted in the symbolism of the tree.

As Bosch has convincingly demonstrated, the influence of the tree and the lotus in Indian culture has been profounder than generally acknowledged up to now. Although he has not succeeded in proving all points which he himself considers to be of central importance, and although in some details his exposition is, quite understandably, open to criticism, it must be emphasized at once that the importance of the fresh insights gained and of the new problems stated far outweigh the critical comments that might be made. In many respects, indeed, the later have to start from the new findings this book offers.

The predominant impression that remains is that Bosch has not only thrown fresh light on many aspects of Indian culture but has led the reader to the very heart of the Old Indian conception of life and the world. It is not surprising, therefore, that from this centre such an illuminating light should radiate in all directions.

If, in spite of these predominating feelings of admiration, one is to voice a reservation on certain points, this is mainly due to the fact that the author has apparently not succeeded in entirely evading the danger that threatens especially the explorer of virgin soil: namely that of not keeping the necessary distance to his subject, as a result of which he is no longer able to view it in the right perspective. (But then, does not a subjective one-sidedness often seem to be a necessary precondition for arriving at new ideas? And should we not acquiesce in this as a necessary part of the *māyā* in which we live?)

This is the only possible explanation for the fact that Bosch has come to consider as the main object of his work the defence of a disputable and one-sided theory, thereby considerably weakening the book as a whole. In the very beginning he confronts his reader with the dilemma: is the vegetal decorative motif a "stylization" of the animal or did a reverse development take place?—thereby entirely ignoring the third possible solution, viz. that both the plant and the animal are old motifs, and that their mutual penetration was meant to intensify their effect as religious symbols. Here, at a decisive point in the line of his argument the author fails to recognize the real problem.

A second point that is not touched upon although it is of vital interest for Bosch's argument is the Vedic myth. He was right in associating the vegetal symbolism with the R̥gvedic myth of *hiranyagarbha*, which gave its name to the book. The lotus, however, is practically unknown in the *R̥gveda*, and the Vedic Aryans certainly had no lotus-myth. This need not mean that this myth was of later origin: it obviously originated in autochthonous circles and only a later stage of the process of Indianization can account for its being grafted on the Vedic myth. This, however, is not relevant in this context. The essential thing is that Bosch's ahistoric approach (which in other parts of his work was motivated and justified by the nature of his material) here blinded him to the fact that the Vedic myth of the golden germ, accordingly, must have existed

independently from the lotus-symbol. It cannot, therefore, be derived from the vegetal motif. Similar objections may be raised to the interpretation of the *amṛta*-bowl, in which Bosch, with the visual approach of the archaeologist, sees a development from the lotus-root, and of many other symbols. These points will be discussed in the following pages.

Here it may only be asked if the *makara*-symbol can really be considered adequately explained by the supposition that the Indian "saw" in the node of the lotus-plant a monster-head with gaping mouth (p. 34). Leaving aside the basic question whether religious symbols are actually derived from visual impressions of nature in the way Bosch sometimes seems to assume²—as for the Vedic seer, he receives his revelations in a different way, cf. RS.X. 129—one may still call to mind the following fact. While vegetal symbols for the bowl with the elixir of life (*soma-amṛta*) are, as far as I can see, unknown in the *Rgveda*, the animal symbol could be connected with the snake or demon (Vṛtra, Vala, Śuṣṇa), who here guards the fire and the *soma* on (or, in) the mountain, and who must first be killed before Agni and Soma can be liberated to spread their blessings in this world.

In later priestly speculations it is sometimes not the mountain but Vṛtra himself in whom these two are said to be confined.³ Sometimes Soma is even identified with Vṛtra.⁴ It is not suggested here that the *makara*-motif is a straight-line development from the mythological figure Vṛtra. This is a problem quite apart, which it is up to the archaeologist to decide. Still, the preceding considerations justify, I think, the conclusion that the Aryan religious tradition leaves the possibility open that animal figures may have been mythological equivalents of the lotus root.⁵

AGNI-SOMA AND THE SYSTEM OF CLASSIFICATION

One of the points which Bosch, it seems to me, has not been able fully to clarify is the place which Agni and Soma occupy in the classification. He rightly

² The ways in which the author expresses himself on pages 34f and 46 reflect different ideas and give the impression that his opinion on this point has not yet fully crystalized.

³ E.g. *Kauṣṭhiki Brāhmaṇa* III. 6, XV. 2, *Śat. Br.* I.6.3.13ff. Cf. *girir vai vṛtro*, *Maitr. Saṃh.* IV. 5.1.

⁴ This has often been discussed. See e.g., Hubert et Maus, *Le sacrifice*, p. 129, S. Lévi, *La doctrine du sacrifice dans les brahmanas*, p. 168, n. 5. Baschardt, *Vṛtra, Det Rituelle daemondrab i den vediske Somakult*, pp. 113ff.

⁵ If it is true (as Bosch has argued with great plausibility) that the pilasters which in Hindu-Javanese art often support the two *makaras* at the ends of the *torana*-posts must be explained as the mountains of sunrise and sunset (p.146), the parallelism is strongly marked here between *makara* as a demon of the underworld from which the sun rises in the morning, sinking into it again at night, and the cosmogonic Vṛtra figure. Compare also the all devouring heads of demons of Kōk pḍ (plate 49c), and the Javanese representations of a small lion or bird (both of them sun symbols) in the open *makara*-mouth, and, on the other hand, e.g. the Vedic myth of Indra, who steals the *amṛta* of the Asuras from the mouth of Śuṣṇa. That the *makara* is based on old Vedic religion may also be proved by the *kidang* motif of east Java (p.131.), which occurs as a variant of the *makara* and is also an underworld symbol. The *kidang* has also a Vedic forefather in Śuṣṇa, the demoniac gazelle of the *Rgveda* (Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie* II², p. 260, n. 1.) [but see now *Indo-Iranian Journal*, 20, p. 100].

attributes a great importance to the opposition between Agni and Soma. He inclines, however, to represent this as a cosmic contrast, as on p. 61, *rasa*-Soma as the essence of the Waters is contrasted with Agni as the fiery essence of the creative breath, and on p. 65, where there is reference to "Agni generated by the creative breath" (who is said to impregnate the female element of the waters). This is, I am afraid, a misrepresentation of the ancient conception of the world. The reader is here faced with the difficulty that the poetic image of the myth evoked by the author is only partly supported by the texts. What is incidentally said on p. 86 about the sketch of the classification system, to the effect that this is partly hypothetical, is also true of the reconstruction of the myth. Since the personal interpolations by the author are not indicated, it is incumbent on this reviewer briefly to formulate the outlines of the Vedic myth of Agni-Soma as he sees it.

In the primeval water (which, in essence, is identical with Amṛta-Soma) Agni is born. The mystery of Agni's birth is unquestionably the central motif of the Indo-Iranian mythology. As Agni in the shape of the sun ascends the sky, the cosmos arises in its dualism of upperworld and underworld and with the cosmic tree as the centre and supporting pillar. Agni's ascension can be viewed either in a monistic way, as the ascension of the Sun horse (*Dadhikrāvan*, *Uccaiḥśravas*), or in a dualistic vision, the primordial hill in which Agni and Soma were hidden being split open from the outside (by Indra). Agni is called the offspring of Heaven and Earth, although the two constituted an undifferentiated primeval world before his arising and, consequently, there was no separate Heaven. Mythologically this is on a par with the fact that Indra is born as a celestial god prematurely (that is, before heaven and earth have been separated): it is not without reason that the tale of his birth remains vague and the figure of his mother cannot be grasped. In fact, not until the sun is liberated from the powers of the snake of the underworld, can Indra "prop up the sky (from the earth)". In other words: only then does he erect the cosmic tree whose cult name therefore is *indra-dhvaja*. In a monistic view the sun itself is the *stambha* (*Rgveda* IV. 23.5).

If one now looks at the picture of the myth as offered by Bosch, the main point⁶ that strikes the reader is that nowhere, as far as one can see, is there reference to a descending fiery essence of creative breath. Agni's birth is a mystery but since he, after being born in the underworld, ascends to heaven in the shape of the sun, and, in his function of sacrificial fire, carries the (*soma*) offering up to the gods, he takes part in both worlds. In a sense he is a "mediator", like the Persian Mithra whose character has some relationship to his.

The whole cosmogony is, in this view, characterized by the notion of an

⁶ I am not entering upon minor points, e.g. that Prajapati (in spite of certain myths in the *Brahmanas*, in which the authors are struggling with the problem of how the multiplicity has arisen from unity) is nevertheless very clearly a totality god comprising *both* worlds (=Kāśyapa). The figure of Vāc also seems misrepresented to me (cf. the identification of Vāc with Vinata in *Maitr. S.* III. 7.3).

emergence from an undifferentiated primeval world. It is not quite clear what may have given Bosch the idea of a male creative breath, consisting of pure light and intelligence (e.g., pp. 51, 59).⁷ It may be conjectured that this is mainly based on the two words *ānīd avātām* in *Rgveda* X.129.2, which he translates "(the One) breathed breathless" (p. 51). The meaning of the second word is uncertain.⁸ Anyway, the undifferentiated primeval Unity has obviously no connection with the *rôle* that is here assigned to a creative breath that descends from heaven.⁹ As it seems to me, it is completely at variance with the general gist of X. 129, which consistently speaks in unmistakable words of *ekam* "the One", to postulate nevertheless a duality, and a "union of these two elements" (p. 52). This is substituting a rationalistic explanation for what to the poet's mind (whose ideas are as consistently monistic as those of the poet of X.82!) was a mystery, which he deliberately abstained from explaining.

If, however, the idea that the descending creative breath was an element of the ancient myth can no longer be maintained, the basis on which Bosch (p. 65) founds his interpretation of the celestial fig tree is taken away. On the other hand, as the reality of the motif of the double tree cannot be doubted, an explanation for it will have to be sought in a different direction. A suggestion will be found at the end of this review-article.

There is a second point which is closely connected with the preceding one. As was noted above, Bosch finally comes to identify the contrast between Agni and Soma with that of upperworld (with a male character) and underworld (conceived as a female being); cf., e.g., p. 65. Quite apart from its many contradictions,¹⁰ this explanation can hardly be correct. It is sufficient to point out that both Soma and Agni were liberated by Indra's creative act and appear in the upperworld, and that Soma, too, is thought of as ascending to heaven (ritually by means of the sacrificial fire, mythically in all likelihood through the stem of the cosmic tree). A confirmation of our conclusion that both Soma and Agni belong to the upper world is bound in the Vedic system of classification, in which Soma is located in the North, and Agni in the East. Both, accordingly, are connected with the upper moiety of the cosmos. Besides, "King Soma" is a typically male figure, who contrasts with the female *surā* (a beverage connected with the underworld).

CLASSIFICATION AND THE MAHĀBHĀRATA

Incidentally, a reference was made above to the system of classification.

⁷ Owing to the premature death of Kasten Rönnow, the book he was writing about Vāyu and the *prāṇa* doctrine never appeared. As very little research has been done in this field, it is impossible to give a more definitive judgment on the possible *rôle* of Vāyu in the cosmogony.

⁸ Cf. Neisser, *Zum Wörterb. des RV.* I, p. 138.

⁹ There is no proof that Bosch was thinking of passages such as *Jaim. Br.* III, pp. 359-360 *adhastat prāṇam akuruta*. In my opinion they cannot simply be used as mythological material, but it is not possible to enter here upon this problem.

¹⁰ Bosch, too, discusses some complications, p. 143.

Since, however, this is not only expressly connected with and derived from the tree motif (pp. 83-92), which is considered primary, it is necessary to go somewhat more deeply into this problem in order to decide whether the claim that the whole system of cosmic classification is derived from the tree motif is justified. Similar claims of the priority of the tribal organization, to which Bosch raises objections (p. 87) will here be left out of consideration. On the other hand Bosch's comments on the Mahābhārata, which illustrate his view, are an occasion to discuss this important issue. It may be useful to preface some brief remarks on the way the classification works. For this purpose we shall confine ourselves to Varuṇa-Mitra.

For Vedic man the cosmos is primarily divided into upperworld and underworld, which are projected on the horizontal plane of the classification in North and East and in West and South respectively (*Maitr. Samh.* IV. 1.10). Within this dichotomy, however, the process of dividing is continued, as is manifest in the contrast between Soma-North and Agni-East. This contrast is also expressed in the association of Agni with right-hand and of *soma* with left-hand, which must be an inheritance from Indo-Iranian prehistory. In the Avesta, indeed, Haoma is associated with the left eye (*Yasna* XI. 4 and 5).

A similar contrast must have existed between West and South. From the Veda to late Hindu sources, the West, where the sun in the evening sinks back into the primeval waters, has been assigned with remarkable consistency to the Adityas, the "older" gods of the primeval world. Of these Varuṇa and Mītra are the two leaders. However, here again the dichotomy is continued (in the third degree). While Varuṇa stands for night, death, the setting sun, Mitra is associated with day, victory over death, the rising sun. It may be said, therefore, even though this is not expressly stated in the texts, that the contrariety between Varuṇa and Mitra, which is the expression of a demonic ambiguity that belongs to the essence of the deity of the underworld, causes Varuṇa and Mitra, *when considered by themselves*, to be opposed to each other like West to East. Here, in his connection with the rising sun (Agni), is the point of contact between Mitra and Indra (who in the classification is assigned to the East). This also accounts for the Indra-features that characterize the Persian Mithra.

This process of repeated partitions results, accordingly, not in a single system of classification, but in a series of systems, one including the other. At every level two groups or entities crystallize. In the main fourfold division (N.E.S.W.) the Adityas (in this case : Varuṇa and Mitra) are one solidary group, but when taken apart they are each other's absolute opposite. What is Mitra's is not Varuṇa's (*Sat. Br.* III.2.4.18). It therefore depends on the delimitation of the "field" which the two opposite entities will be.¹¹

¹¹ It may be noted in passing that what we read here from the Vedic data agrees more than superficially with the principles of structural linguistics. (According to recent information the structural linguist Roman Jakobson has been working for some time on a "structural" explanation of myths). One may shudder at the thought of a future in which mythology would have become a

It is in this context that the dramatic fight of the Great Epic will first be considered more closely. Bosch's very important comments on the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas confirm throughout the main thesis of Held's doctoral thesis *The Mahābhārata*. Particularly striking is the parallelism of the epic with the old myth of Kadrū and Vinatā, which is situated at the beginning of the creation (*devayuga*). Kaśyapa (tortoise), a typical representative of the totality, has two spouses. One of these, Kadrū, has a hundred nāgas for sons, the other, Vinatā, has only two sons, Garuḍa and Aruṇa.

The myth clearly represents the strife between the two cosmic moieties as the result of a contest between the two mythic primordial mothers. It is further a striking feature of Kadrū (Aditi), that in the Suparṇākhyāna she is said to be one-eyed (*kāṇā*). This characteristic, which is the very point in the contest in sharp-sightedness between her and Vinatā, is no doubt an old trait. A parallel in the epic is that not only the father of the hundred Kauravas (who bears the name of a snake-god, Dhṛtarāṣṭrā) is blind but also the mother Gāndhārī symbolically blinds herself at her marriage by bandaging her eyes. This deed, hardly motivated at all in the epic (cf. *Mhbh.* I. 103. 12f) can only be understood if Gāndhārī is considered equivalent to Kadrū.¹² In that case her blindness was a mythological necessity which was no longer understood by later poets.

The Great War is fought in Kurukṣetra, near the Yamunā and the Ganges. It was one of Bosch's bright ideas that these two rivers represent the cosmic orientation right versus left (p. 89). However, his supposition [in Dutch edition only — Ed.] that the two rivers symbolize the orbit of the sun between sun-rise and sun-set seems less fortunate. Since in late texts the "right-hand" Yamunā is called the daughter of the sun (*tapanaduhitar*, etc.) it can hardly be due to mere coincidence that the "left-hand" Ganges is said to flow down from the moon on Śiva's forehead. Now it is striking that the older city of the Kauravas lies on the Ganges (and thus is associated with the notions "moon" and "left") and that it is called the city of Elephants (Hāstinapura, Hastināpura), the elephant being a typical animal of the underworld in Indian mythology. Nor can it be coincidental that the younger city of the Pandavas, viz. Indraprastha, is situated on the bank of the Yamunā, and that it is named after the protagonist of the "celestial phratry", viz. *Indraprastha*. From this, Bosch convincingly concludes that Kurukṣetra, and in a wider sense Madhyadeśa, "the middle region" (which presupposes a five-fold

structuralistic toy in the hands of systematists. On the other hand one should seriously consider whether a structure-imposing activity of the human mind has not put its mark on the form of the myth as well as on that of the language. That such a structure in itself only provides a skeleton, a frame of thought, and does not tell anything about the religious life within this frame is as certain as it is probable that a knowledge of this structure can save us from unnecessary errings of our phantasy in the jungle of mythology.

¹² The phenomenon of underworld characters having one eye or being blind is anything but clear. Dumézil's remarks on this point do not get to the root, it seems to me. (cf. *Mitra-Varuṇa*, 1940, p. 133ff.).

division of Āryāvarta) was looked upon as the cosmic centre. It is interesting to note in this connection that here lay the holy places *Vārāha-tīrtha* (III. 81.15) and *Lokoddhāra-tīrtha* (III. 81.37). This means that here the cosmic boar raised the first earth from the primeval waters and that, accordingly, it was thought to be the earth's navel, the primordial hill.

It is in the cosmic centre that the battle between the two parties is fought. By this very situation it can be recognized as a replica of the fight between Gods and Asuras on the occasion of the churning of the *amṛita*.¹³ Just as the Pāṇḍavas are here the right-hand party, and the Kauravas the left-hand one, so Prajāpati creates the Gods on his right hand and the Asuras on his left.¹⁴ In this connection the role of Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa is particularly interesting. In the Vedic classification Viṣṇu is situated in the centre and in accordance with the cyclic character of the year (both normal and cosmic) he is either in the underworld (Viṣṇu's sleep) or in the upperworld. He thus belongs to both parts, which is expressed in later mythology by his two *vāhanas*, viz, Śeṣa, the serpent of the underworld, and Garuda, the celestial bird. As for Viṣṇu's position during the *amṛitamanthana*, the epic gives only some vague indications (*Mhbh.* I.16.14), but the reliefs of Angkor Vat provide a valuable illustration. Here Viṣṇu is represented in the very centre, standing between the two parties and giving both his hands.¹⁵ It is a well-known fact that he finally helps the gods to gain the victory by fraud. In the epic Kṛṣṇa's role is similarly ambiguous. He, too, is related to both parties, but it is due to his intervention that the Pāṇḍavas end by gaining the victory.¹⁶ The correctness of Held's conclusion that in the epic Kṛṣṇa must from the beginning have had the function of Viṣṇu, cannot, therefore, be doubted. (As for the relation of *this* Kṛṣṇa to the divine child Kṛṣṇa, the god of the cow-herds of Mathurā, this is an entirely different matter. It can only be interpreted in terms of mythological equivalence).

We may take a further step. Caland, in his very original lecture on "De Incarnaties van den god Wishṇu"¹⁷ has argued very plausibly that the relation of Arjuna to Kṛṣṇa can be considered a replica of Indra's to Viṣṇu.¹⁸ Just as it is said in the epic that that party will be victorious with which Kṛṣṇa

¹³ For *amṛita* "not dying = living", cf. Thieme, *Untersuchungen zur Wortkunde und Auslegung des Rigveda*, p. 64, no.1.

¹⁴ *Kāth. Saṁh.* IX. 11.

¹⁵ Cf. the ritualistic interpretation in *Śat. Br.* III. 4.4.15: Agni is day, Soma is night, Viṣṇu the connecting link.

¹⁶ The Bhagavadgita is spoken by Kṛṣṇa "between the two armies" (1.21) and thus, "between the parties".

¹⁷ Paper read before the Provinciaal Utrechtsch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, 31 May 1927, p. 27.

¹⁸ Against this background it may be possible to explain the fact that gold is mentioned with remarkable frequency in connection with Arjuna and his monkey-banner (e.g. *Mhbh.* I. 216.3. & 8).

sides (*yataḥ Kṛṣṇas tato jayaḥ* I.97.15 etc.), so we shall have to attribute a far more fundamental importance to Viṣṇu's seemingly insignificant rôle in Indra's Vṛtra-fight than earlier Vedic scholars like Hillebrandt and Oldenberg were ready to admit: the two-sidedness of Viṣṇu's nature is apparently the determinant factor which alone could incline the balance in the combat of the cosmic moieties.

Also here, however, the dichotomy continues. The number of five Pāṇḍavas, corresponding to the two sons of Vinatā, already points to a further partition within this group. The total conception can be visualized as a *stambha* on the top of which there is a horizontal wheel with four spokes (pointing to the four points of the compass), whereas at the bottom there are the Kauravas whose number is legion. Bosch has been aware of this problem of further partition but has not arrived at a conclusion (p. 88). The question there asked can be answered by pointing to the *digvijaya* (*Mhbh.* II. 23.9), where it is said that Arjuna marches towards the North, Bhīma towards the East, Sahadeva to the South and Nakula to the West, while Yudhiṣṭhira remains in the town "in good fortune". In other words, the three sons of the first wife Kuntī are found in the centre and in the North and East (the "divine" quarters), whereas the sons of Mādri are in the half connected with the underworld.

Corresponding to the two sons of Vinatā, Garuḍa and Aruna, we here find with a further partition the pairs Bhīma-Arjuna and Nakula-Sahadeva, who have their counterparts in the social structure in respectively the *kṣatriya* and *vaiśya*.¹⁹ This division has a stereotyped character. In a modern lithographic picture in the Bombay edition of the Mahābhārata,²⁰ Yudhiṣṭhira is seen seated in the middle under a parasol and having a lotus in his hand, while Bhīma and Arjuna are seated at his right hand, and the twins at his left. The connection with the social structure has particularly been pointed out by Wikander (following the lead of Dumézil) who stressed the typically passive rôle of Yudhiṣṭhira as *dharma-rāja*.²¹ The poets of the epic were still fully conscious of this connection, as is shown by *Mhbh.* I. 1.80f., where the specific qualities of the various Pāṇḍavas are mentioned which characterize them as the prototypes of the various social classes. So Yudhiṣṭhira is characterized by purity, Bhīma by firmness, Arjuna by aggressive heroism, and the twins by obedience and modesty.²² Such an inquiry may certainly be important for Indo-Iranian prehistory.²³ Still it is a secondary dichotomy,

¹⁹ Therefore the idea of five branches (or phalli) resting in the stem (or vulva) (p. 89) cannot be right. One should note the memorial verse (I.1.66 and V.29.46) in which Yudhiṣṭhira is called the tree, Arjuna the stem, Bhīma the branches and Nakula-Sahadeva the leaves and flowers. I cannot see any more in it than the tree motif growing rank at a late date, especially because something parallel is said of the Kauravas.

²⁰ Frontispiece of the Sabhā-parvan (*Mhbh.* II).

²¹ *Religion och Bibel* VI (1947), pp. 27-39. Cf. also G. Dumézil, *Jupiter-Mars-Quirinus* IV, p. 37ff.

²² That the heavenly fathers of the twins, the Aśvins, were considered to be *vaiśyas* in the world of the gods seems to follow from *Mhbh.* I. 1.81.

²³ Cf. especially Wikander, "Sur le fonds indoiranien des épopées de la Perse et de l'Inde", *La Nouvelle Cléo* no. 7 (juillet 1950), pp. 310-329.

and as such it is of minor interest for our understanding of the epic than the primary contrast between Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas, which corresponds to the social dichotomy *ārya: śūdra* (*Ṛgvedic ārya vārna: dāsa vārna*).

A justification for the preceding digression may be found, first, in the fundamental importance of the problems concerning the Mahābhārata and, second, in the need to place the various views (like those of Wikander and Held) in their relative positions. On the other hand, this more detailed picture puts us in a position to ask where any indication can be found in favour of the theory that the tree motif was primary and determinant. As far as I can see, the answer must be that it is possible to parallel the classification consistently with the world-tree. This, however, is rather due to the fact that this cosmic symbol is a stylized form of the natural tree, and that only in this form it corresponds to the classification based upon a progressive partitioning. No wonder, then, that this classification can also be found in the symbol.²⁴ It is clear, however, that the functional meaning of an opposition like North and East (=divine) versus West and South (=demonic) cannot be explained from the branching of a tree but presupposes a pre-existent complex of notions that is fully independent of it.

This, then, is sufficient to show that the symbol, which is a meaningful sign, cannot be prior to what it stands for. It may be added, in greater detail, that the basic scheme of the Mahābhārata was found to be the representative of the cosmic centre (Kurukṣetra) with the Pāṇḍavas standing on the right side and the Kauravas on the left. This was found to be an exact replica of the situation during the *amṛtamanthana*, where Mount Mandara functioned as the centre. There is nothing which could compel us to start from the tree as the primary motif. Bosch, it is true, derives the cosmic mountain itself from the lotus "root" (p. 96) but the idea of a primordial hill must certainly have been an Aryan notion (although not exclusively an Aryan one) whereas the lotus-root, as pointed out above, seems to have entered Indo-Aryan culture as an indigenous influence. Any combinations which these equivalent symbols²⁵ would show in art must be secondary. There is no reason, therefore, to consider the possibility that one may have arisen from the other.

THE INVERTED FIG-TREE

As was pointed out above, the fig-tree plays a prominent part in the explana-

²⁴ The same holds good for Bosch's analogous remarks about the world-order (p. 238); the classification *makes use of* the tree-symbol.

²⁵ There seems to have been as close a relation between mountain and jar as between lotus plant and lotus root. Just as in the branching of a tree, there seem to have been in the mythical world conception, after Indra "split open" the mountain, two or four rivers streaming from the top of the mountain (cf. Gaṅgā-Yamunā and the four world-oceans, *Ath. V., Mhbh.*). The "jar with four openings" (*kāśa cāturbīla*) of *Ath. V. XVIII. 4.30* can therefore stand as *pars pro toto* for the mountain + the *amṛta* cask. Cf. also the "young maiden with four braids, who wraps herself in veils" (RS. X. 114.3.) ?

tion which Bosch gives of the double-tree motif. In order to give a clear idea of the complications offered by the texts, the trees mentioned in them should first be listed :

(i) the common *aśvattha*, *Ficus religiosa* L, especially honoured as representing the world-tree and as such undoubtedly considered as rooted in the primordial hill (although this cannot be proved from the old texts);

(ii) the inverted fig-tree, occasionally mentioned as a kind of divine mystery;

(iii) the *aśvattha*, growing as an epiphyte on the stem of the *śamī* (or another kind of tree), its roots hanging down from it;

(iv) the *nyagrodha* (banian tree) with aerial roots. This offers *a priori* a wide scope to various interpretations. Since publication of the original Dutch edition of *The Golden Germ*, Emeneau has given us better information about the epiphyte.²⁶

Bosch starts his reasoning with the fig-tree rooted in heaven, equating it to the descending creative breath. He then explains (iii) and (iv) as variants of (ii), resulting from a supposed ambiguity of the texts (p. 75ff.). I will confine myself here to the starting-point, viz. the inverted fig-tree.

In *Kath. Up.* VI.1 (imitated in *Bhag. G.* 12. 1-2) an *aśvattha* is spoken of in rather mysterious terms. Its root points upwards, its branches hang down, all worlds rest in it, and it is *brahman*. A similar description is found in *Maitr. Up.* VI.4, but here the direction of the branches is not mentioned. The same image and the same terminology occur in the presumably somewhat older *Taitt. Ār.* I. II.5,²⁷ though here the tree is not specified as an *aśvattha*. Here again a mystery is connected with it: whoever knows this tree is beyond the reach of death (cf. esp. *Rgveda* I.164.21). Finally, the earliest instance in *Rgveda* I.24.7: "In the unfathomable space King Varuna, of purified intelligence, upholds the tree's *stupa*; they (=the branches) stand directed downwards. May their rays be fixed in us."

So far no satisfactory explanation has been given.²⁸ As Emeneau has rightly pointed out, it is out of the question that these Indian poets should simply have confused the *aśvattha* and the banian tree.²⁹ If an attempt is to be made to continue the endless discussion about this subject, three points must be kept in mind:

(i) In all passages it is clearly the tree of life to which man has or should have a certain relation. From the beginning this tree was probably considered to be an *aśvattha* (cf. *Rgveda* I. 164.22), but even if an *aśvattha* was not identified

²⁶ M.B. Emeneau, "The Strangling Figs in Sanskrit Literature," *Univ. of California Publication in Classical Philology* X (1949), pp. 345-370.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 367.

²⁸ See summary in *ibid.*, p. 366. The recent, thorough philological treatment by Thieme, *Untersuchungen zur Wortkunde und Auslegung des Rigveda* (Halle, 1949), pp. 55-73, unfortunately offers little that is new. In my opinion Thieme did not penetrate to the core of the matter and has misjudged that character of the tree, as well as of the two *suparnas*.

²⁹ Thus Garbe, R. Otto, Geldner, and also Bosch, p. 70.

with it until the *Kath. Up.*³⁰, this is not essential for the argumentation.

(ii) Everywhere it is a mystery that is hinted at. As this tree has so clearly the character of an (esoteric) religious symbol, it is a *priori* doubtful that a naturalistic explanation, whether as a banian tree (Geldner, Bosch) or as an epiphyte (Emeneau, p. 367) is justified.

(iii) In the *Rgveda* it is Varuṇa who holds the tree, and this important fact has generally been ignored.

Varuṇa and the other Asuras are the "older" race of gods, i.e. the gods of that primordial world which precedes the partition into upper and nether world.³¹ As such Varuṇa dwells in the primeval water from which the earth has merged and on which it rests. Though he withdraws as a god already in the tenth book of the *Rgveda*, traces of his former character must have been preserved in the popular cult. As late as about the 11th century A.D. *Varuṇa-deva* was the common term for a slab on a well in Chambā (in N.W. India),³² for this well was the entrance to the subterranean waters. As, however, *amṛta* is the essence (*rasa*) of these waters, the (subterranean) *amṛta* jar, in which the tree of life had supposedly been planted (as is testified by decorative art), stood in Varuṇa's realm: rooted in the netherworld, it reached with its crown into the highest heaven. In the daytime this realm was invisible to human eyes, but as in the system of classification the upper world was related to day and the netherworld to night, in India (just as elsewhere) the night sky as heavenly ocean was equated to the primordial water.³³ Thus it is said of Varuṇa that, while proceeding amidst the waters, he *looks down* on the justice and injustice of men (VI.49.3). Varuṇa's realm, in so far as it was located in the sky, was actually considered an inverted world. This is proved by the word *nicina* "pointed downwards" which is used for the branches of the tree but also in connection with the cask, cf. *Rgveda* V.85.3: "Varuṇa has poured out the cask with its rim³⁴ turned downwards, over heaven and earth and the intermediate space. Thereby the king sprinkles the barley." This inexhaustible (VII. 72.10) cask is elsewhere called the "well-cask abounding in water" (*útsaṃ kāvandham udriṇam*, VIII. 7.10)³⁵, and is undoubtedly the same as the "golden well" (IX.107.4) in the sky, which can only refer to the

³⁰ Emeneau, p. 367.

³¹ It is, naturally, not possible to give here any documentation nor to enter upon details in what follows.

³² J. Ph. Vogel, *Antiquities of Chamba State*, I, p. 177f. and *passim*.

³³ Consequently there is no longer any sense in the old controversy about whether Varuṇa was originally the god of the water or a celestial god.

³⁴ For this word see Wackernagel-Debrunner, *KZ.* 67 (1942), p. 171 f.

³⁵ It might be objected that the rain, which Varuṇa and the Maruts pour from this cask, does not only fall during the night. However, the Ganges does not only stream at night either, but the *sadhu* who imitated its descent from heaven (Bosch, p. 187, no. 126) made it take place in the latter part of the night until dawn (for mythologically the Ganges rises on the moon). Only at certain moments does earthly reality answer to the ideal norm of myth.

moon.³⁶ This image still lives on in the epic tale of the *amṛta*-churning (the day aspect), in which the ocean that must be churned is denoted as “a jar”.³⁷ The vedic *svena*-myth can, in my opinion, be explained in a similar way. In this myth an eagle (later Garuḍa) steals the *amṛta* from the sky, which has the character of a netherworld because of the snake-nature of the Soma guardian *Kṛṣānu* (“the footless archer”).³⁸ In the same way the tall mast with a golden fish or yellow bowl on top (Bosch, p. 155f.) is the *indradhvaja*, but in its nightly aspect.

Therefore it seems likely that an explanation of the inverted fig-tree must be sought in the night aspect of the cosmos. Rooted in the heavenly *amṛta*-jar, the moon,³⁹ it sends its beneficial vital force into the hearts of the faithful, who are believed to be connected with the branches of the tree.⁴⁰

If this conclusion is correct, the symbol of the inverted fig-tree is based on a conception, essentially different from that of an *aśvattha* and a *śamī*. In that case Bosch's reasoning (p. 75 f.), which tries to combine the two on the ground of a supposed ambiguity of the literary texts, cannot be right. Indeed one sometimes finds the day and night aspect combined into one image (which gives the image its maximum symbolic power). This is, for instance, the case when a pillar rests with its base on a *kumbha* and bears an inverted (“songsang”) *kumbha* on its top.⁴¹ The inverted form is then, however, an indispensable requisite. As it is lacking in the double-tree motif, the inverted fig-tree, together with the descending creative breath, cannot be maintained, in my opinion, as the basis of Bosch's reasoning.⁴²

It should be noted in passing that the equivalence of the Vedic *amṛta*-jar with the non-Vedic lotus root does not justify deriving of the first symbol from the second (p.121 ff.). When, further, Bosch derives the conception of

³⁶ Cf. for this Hillebrandt, *Ved. Mytho.*² I, p. 321f. and p. 326 (about the golden cask in the *pur ayodhā Ath. V.X. 2.31.*). The identity of *Amṛta* and Agni, as stated by Bosch, only holds good if it is limited to Agni in its nightly aspect as moon.

³⁷ *Mhbh.* I. 15.12. Bombay edn., *mathyatān kalaśodadih, bhaviṣyaty amṛtam tatra* and 16.32., *kṣobhya-tān kalaśaḥ sarvair* (cf. RS. VI. 69.6). The *kalsā* has become the emblem par excellence of Hinduism, comparable to the cross of Christianity and the half-moon of Islam.

³⁸ In the epic Garuḍa must creep through a revolving wheel in the sky to find the *kumbha* (jar). I (Kuiper) differ from Bosch (p. 149) in seeing in this only a doubling of the *kumbha*-moon motif (cf. p. 159n. 75: the golden wheel as representing the jar of the underworld). To interpret the wheel as the sun, seems mythologically impossible to me.

³⁹ A striking confirmation of this is found in Indonesian traditions (Bosch, p. 246).

⁴⁰ R.S. II. 5.4: “Who knows his (viz. Agni's) fixed rules, grows (with these) as with the twigs,” (*vayā ivānu rohate*) may perhaps be considered a literary expression of that notion, which Bosch was the first to recognize on the reliefs of Bharhut and Sanchi.

⁴¹ Cf. Bosch, p. 157, whose explanation seems hardly acceptable to me.

⁴² In case one wants to compare the aerial roots of the banyan tree (Bosch, p. 69f.), it should be noted that this does not seem to be parallel to the *aśvattha* but rather opposed to it and that, as is shown by its connection with Rudra-Śiva, it symbolizes the cosmic *nivṛtti* at the end of the sacrificial year. On the other hand the *aśvattha* is connected with the cosmic expansion (*pravṛtti*) during the sacrificial year, and with Viṣṇu. Only once is the banyan tree called the tree of Varuṇa, in which case it must represent in earthly reality the inverted *aśvattha* of myth.

"pot-bellied" beings from the jar, he is dealing with a problem to which a purely archaeological argumentation cannot do justice.

If we may assume as correct that several names of "pot-bellied" beings (e.g. *udumbala*-, *Hidimba*-, *Heramba*-, *kumbhāṇḍa*) are of Proto-Munda origin, and that especially some non-Aryan word groups denote both "jar" and "belly" e.g. *kābāṇḍha*, *bhaṇḍa*, *bhanka* "pot, jar"; *kābandha*, *phaṇḍa*, *phāṇḍa* "belly", cf. *ku-mbhāṇḍa*),—which is again connected with the stronger sensorial character of these languages as compared with Aryan—then there is every reason to consider the "pot-bellied" beings as having been adopted from a foreign culture. In that case an explanation will have to be given which takes other associations into account.⁴³

THE DOUBLE-TREE MOTIF

If we are right in concluding that an essential part of Bosch's explanation for the double-tree motif must be abandoned, the question crops up how this symbol can have arisen. One suggestion may be given here in conclusion. Let us start with the Vedic conception of the world: together with Agni's ascension to the sky, the tree rises up from the primordial hill⁴⁴ and supports the roof of heaven as the world-pillar. Its roots, however, reach through the mountain into the primeval water,⁴⁵ on which the earth rests, and thence they bring upwards the *amṛta* (the essence of these waters).

In the cosmogonies of the later Yajurvedic texts⁴⁶ we find, however, by the side of the old motif of the primordial hill,⁴⁷ the beginning of which is brought up on the snout of a boar from the bottom of the water, the typically native symbol of the lotus plant, on the leaf of which the boar puts the first earth. The first reference to this occurs as early as *R̥gveda* VI. 16.13. The two symbols are henceforth used side by side as equivalents. The conclusion, then, seems justified that in principle the lotus + fig-tree motif is a substitute for the primordial hill + tree motif.⁴⁸ It is possible that at a later date the notion of the *aśvattha* parasitizing on a *śamī* (these two standing already at an early date for the upper-and nether-world) was connected with the image of tree + sun (*brahmamula*) and mountain + jar (*padmamula*) as representations of Agni and Soma.

I have preferred an ample discussion of some fundamental points to losing myself in a detailed analysis of the infinitely varied phenomena dealt with

⁴³ The remarkable fact that most of the words for "jar" already in the *R̥gveda* give the impression of being of foreign origin raises problems in this connection which can only be hinted at here.

⁴⁴ It has been remarked above that the conception of the Vedic primordial hill cannot be derived from the lotus root (Bosch, p. 96).

⁴⁵ Compare with this the Javanese *gunungan*.

⁴⁶ *Taitt. Brahm.* and *Trinātra Brahm.* (see Hertel, *Die Himmelstore im Veda und in Avesta*, p. 24f.).

⁴⁷ The *mātṛkā* of the Indra-festival (Bosch, p. 153).

⁴⁸ In Bosch's view the relation is, of course, the other way round (p. 96).

in this book. It was impossible to accept that the vegetal motif is always the primary one. In this connection it is necessary to take a firm stand against Bosch's idea that the "macrocosmic" conception of the world must necessarily be a "mechanical" one (p. 231 f.). In my opinion this is a misconception. The question may be left open whether there is any sense in contrasting in this connection macro-and microcosmic. It may suffice to observe that a conception of the world that has its root in the old Vedic myth (and therefore in the Agni-mysticism) automatically cannot have been "mechanical".

It may be said that *The Golden Germ* is a book of genius, written by a scholar with an inspired vision. The task the author set himself was, however, extremely heavy, owing to the bewildering diversity of the material that had to be dealt with and to the unusual obscurity and difficulty of the problems of the symbolism. Even for a man with Bosch's originality of vision and great erudition it was impossible to succeed completely in the first instance. It is to be hoped that in a future definitive edition Bosch will organize the material in a different way, and that after some revision of the basic points of his reasoning, he will also decide to give up the idea that the plant motif was the main source of mythological conceptions. For then this book will become what it is already in essence: one of the classics in the field of the history of Indian culture.

3. THE THREE STRIDES OF VIṢṆU

1. The theories suggested in explanation of the character of God Viṣṇu are remarkably divergent. The prevailing view that he was a solar deity¹ has often been questioned and criticized in recent times.² Besides he has been

¹ Thus already Śākapūṇi, if his interpretation of the three strides as referring to *prthivyām*, *antarikṣe*, *divi* (Yāska, Nir. 12.19) implies the trias Agni-Vāyu-Sūrya (cf. Durga's commentary and Brhaddevatā I.90, but on the other hand ŚB. I.9.3.9) and Aurnavābha (*ibid.*, see Macdonell, JRAS 1895, p. 170), probably Yāska, Nir. 5.17: *śipiviṣṭaḥ*] *pratipannaraśmiḥ*, Brhaddevatā (c. 400 B.C.?) II.69: *Viṣṇur nirucyate sūryaḥ sarvaṃ sarvāntaraś ca yaḥ*, Skandasvāmin (c. 500 A.D.) ad I.22.17: *Viṣṇur evā 'dityarūpeṇa lokān prakāśayati* (etc.), Comm. ad PB. XVIII.7.13 *bradhnaśya*] *ādityasya Viṣṇurūpasya*, Mahidhara (c. 1590 A.D.) ad VS. 5.15 (= Agni-Vāyu-Sūrya), and further, e.g., Whitney, JAOS 3 (1853), p. 325, A. Weber, *Zwei vedische Texte über Omina und Portenta* (1858), p. 338, A. Kuhn, *Die Herabkunft des Feuers und des Göttertranks* (1859), p. 66 f., p. 251, Edw. Moor, *The Hindu Pantheon* (1810, 1864, 1897), p. 13 (sun, earth, water, space), Lassen, *Ind. Altertumsk.* I² (1867), p. 919, Max Müller, *Hymns to the Maruts or Stormgods* (1869), p. 116 f. (= SBE. 32, p. 133 f.), Eggeling, SBE. 12 (1882), p. 73 n.2 ("? the all pervading Sun"), 26 (1895), p. 62 n.2, E. Hardy, *Die Vedisch-brahmanische Periode der Religion des alten Indiens* (1893), p. 33 f. (Sun and Moon), L. von Schroeder, *Indiens Literatur und Cultur* (1887), p. 324 ff., *Mysterium und Minus* (1908), p. 56 (Sonnengott und Fruchtbarkeitsgott), *Arische Religion* (1916-1923) II, pp. 64, 669 (earlier a moon-god), Barth, *Religions of India* (1891), p. 165 f., Macdonell, JRAS, 1895, p. 175 ("originally a sun-god"), *Vedic Mythology* (1897), p. 38, E. W. Hopkins, *The Religions of India* (1895), p. 41, *Epic Mythology* (1915), p. 85, P. Deussen, *Sechzig Upanishad's des Veda* (1897), p. 277 n., Th. Bloch, *Wörter und Sachen* I, p. 80 ff., Oppert, *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 37 (1905), p. 331 f., D. R. Bhandarkar, *Lectures on the Ancient History of India* (1919), p. 128, Havell, *Handbook of Indian Art* (1920,² 1927), p. 164 ("the sun at noon supporting the heavens [Viṣṇu-Sūrya], or the sun at midnight under the earth reposing on the coils of the serpent of eternity [Ananta or Śeṣha], the Milky way"), H. D. Griswold, *The Religion of the Rigveda* (1923), p. 284, A. B. Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda* (1925), p. 109, A. Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie* II² (1929), p. 319 f., A. Hohenberger, *Die indische Flutsage und das Matsyapurāṇa* (1930), p. 96, J. J. Meyer, *Trilogie altindischer Mächte und Feste der Vegetation* (1937), II, p. 258, J. C. Ghose, JBORS, 24 (1938), p. 89 ff., R. N. Dandekar, *Kane-Volume* (1941), p. 100, V. M. Apte in: Majumdar and Pusalker, *The Vedic Age* (1951), p. 367 f., etc. Cf. also Gonda, *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism* (1954), p. 172: "the eternal phenomenon of the pervading and omnipresent, mighty and blessing stream of celestial light, warmth, and energy."

² Cf. e.g., Hopkins, JAOS 16 (1896), *Proceedings* p. cxlv ff., S. Konow, *Visvabharati Quarterly* III (1925), p. 216, S. Konow-P. Tuxen, *Religions of India* (1949), p. 61 f., Neisser, JAOS 45 (1925), p. 288, Hillebrandt, *Ved. Myth.* II², p. 319, H. Oldenberg, *Religion des Veda* (1923), p. 232, Haggerty Krappe, *Mythologie universelle* (1930), p. 141 f.

held to represent the Moon,³ or the Fire-god,⁴ Soma,⁵ or a mountain god associated with vegetation,⁶ a god of fertility,⁷ or a deity connected with *Vṛtrahan*.⁸ He has been stated to be an awakener to life,⁹ or the sacrifice,¹⁰ a popular personification of the *brahman*- or *ātman*-,¹¹ or a god of veneration and propitiation.¹² It has further been suggested that "the original character of Viṣṇu" was a non-Aryan¹³ or a proto-Indian¹⁴ religious concept. He has been considered a philosopher's,¹⁵ as well as a "late popular" god,¹⁶ a striding giant,¹⁷ no less than an *anima*, the essence of the *pitāras* and, at the same time, the solar bird,¹⁸ the god of evolution,¹⁹ of movement,²⁰ or of immanence.²¹

³ H. Kunike, "Viṣṇu, ein Mondgott" (*Mythologische Bibliothek* VIII nr. 4, Leipzig, 1916), pp. 5-17, von Schroeder, *Arische Religion* II, p. 669. Cf. Hardy, *Die Vedisch-brahmanische Periode*, p. 33 f.

⁴ Bergaigne, *Religion védique* II, pp. 416, 418 ("l'identité primitive de Vishnu avec Agni et Soma, prototypes de tous les sacrificateurs"), Sarkar, *The Folkelements of Hindu Culture*, p. 12.

⁵ Kasten Rönnow, *Trita Āptya* (I), p. 93 f.: "der vedische Soma-gott par préférence."

⁶ Havell, *The History of Aryan Rule in India* (1918), pp. 28, 111, 182 f. (but at the same time a solar god).

⁷ H. Güntert, *Der arische Weltkönig und Heiland* (1923), p. 292 (an ithyphallic god, similarly Haggerty Krappe, *Mythologie universelle*, 1930, p. 141 ff.). Cf. Neisser, *JAOS* 45 (1925), p. 288.

⁸ G. Dumézil, *Revue de l'histoire des religions* CXVII (1938), p. 167.

⁹ Paul Mus, *L'Inde vue de l'est*, p. 22: "doué . . . du pouvoir d'éveiller la vie dans le monde qu'ouvraient ses trois pas mythiques."

¹⁰ L. D. Barnett, *Hindu Gods and Heroes* (1922), p. 37 ff., J. Charpentier, *Festgabe Jacobi* (1927), p. 277 n.2 (but according to H. Oldenberg, *Die Lehre der Upanishaden*, p. 17, a later interpretation).

¹¹ Deussen, *Der Gesang des Heiligen*, Introduction p. iv.

¹² B. Faddegon, in: Van der Leeuw (e.a.), *De godsdiensten der wereld* I¹ (1940), pp. 296 f., 303.

¹³ E.g., Przyluski, *Archiv Orientalní* 4 (1932), p. 261 ff., R. Otto, *Zeitschr. für Missionskunde und Religionswissenschaft* 1936, p. * 16 (reprint), von Eickstedt, *Hirt-Festschrift* I, p. 362. Cf. Paul Mus, *L'Inde vue de l'est*, p. 22 (concerning Kṛṣṇa), W. Ruben, *Eisen-schmiede und Dämonen in Indien*, p. 284.

¹⁴ *Census Report* 1931, I, 1, p. 394 ff. (p. 396: "the fruit of reaction of . . . proto-Hinduism to the Rigvedic invaders"), Hrozný, *Archiv Orientalní* 13 (1942), p. 48.

¹⁵ L. von Schroeder, *Mysterium und Mimus* (1908), p. 56 (cf. Lassen, *Indische Altertumskunde* I² [1867], p. 919), contested by Oldenberg, *Religion des Veda*³⁻⁴, p. 228 n.2; Wüst, *Vergleichendes und etymologisches Wörterbuch des Alt-Indo-Arischen* I (1934), p. 92.

¹⁶ See Lassen, *l.c.*

¹⁷ Oldenberg, *Religion des Veda*³⁻⁴ (1923), p. 233; cf. *Nachrichten der Göttinger Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften* 1915, p. 374 f.

¹⁸ K. F. Johansson, *Solfågel i Indien* (1910), pp. 9, 14, 28, 70. Cf. also the same author, "Über die altindische Göttin Dhīṣaṇā und Verwandtes" (1917), pp. 47 n.2, 49, J. Charpentier, *Die Suparnaśage* (1921), p. 329 ff. (originally a bird, either the solar bird, or a bird with a bough of the tree of Life [Soma], or the primordial father of the living, conceived of as a bird. But in the Veda a solar god). See also *Festgabe Jacobi* p. 277 n.2.

¹⁹ G. J. Held, *The Mahābhārata, An ethnological study* (thesis, Leiden, 1935), p. 222: "Śiva is the god of *saṃhāra*, Viṣṇu the god of the *sṛisṭi*"; cf. p. 221: "Viṣṇu is the

The very existence of such a diversity of views might provoke some questions with regard to the methods applied in the field of "Comparative Religion." For we are here concerned with one of the prominent gods in a religion that we know from the very beginnings of history up to the present day. The mass of evidence no doubt constitutes a special difficulty, but on the other hand it is unquestionable that the manifest inability of modern science to understand this god is not due to a lack of data. The main problem is rather, how to find an adequate interpretation for the evidence contained in the ancient texts. One is reminded of Andrew Lang's words: "Nothing in all mythology is more difficult than the attempt to get a clear view of the gods of Vedic India."²² Indeed, we are here confronted with the fundamental difficulty of Vedic mythology, viz., the impossibility of understanding a single mythological figure isolated from the context of the mythological system. Monographs on single deities are indispensable as a first step, because no interpretation can be attempted before all data have been gathered and arranged. The final interpretation, however, will have to account for a god's function within the total system.

2. In the oldest Vedic text Viṣṇu's function seems to be restricted to his taking three strides through the Universe. Nothing suggests that this text is particularly reticent about the real nature of the god's divine act. So a correct interpretation of the Rigvedic evidence is of vital importance. At the end of the nineteenth century Macdonell summarized the contemporary research in these words: "The opinion that Viṣṇu's three steps refer to the course of the sun is almost unanimous."²³ They are equally true today. There is only a difference of opinion as to the identity of each of the steps, which some interpret as referring to the rising, culmination, and setting of the sun, while others hold them to mean the three divisions of the Universe. From Macdonell's classification of the Rigvedic passages²⁴ we learn that Viṣṇu:

- 1) took three steps (I.22.18, VIII.12.27),
- 2) strode with three steps through this world (*idāṃ* I.22.17), or traversed with three steps this wide extended sphere (*sadhāstham* I.154.3),
- 3) traversed the earthly regions (*pārthivāni rājāṃsi*), and fixed the upper sphere (*ūttaram sadhāstham*) while stepping thrice (I.154.1),

All-god, viewed from the side of life, Śiva the same, but viewed from the side of death," p. 224: "Śiva especially is the god of involution, Viṣṇu of evolution" (but see also pp. 145, 194!). Cf. in this connection Hopkins, *Religions of India*, p. 388: "Viṣṇu and Śiva are different gods. But each in turn represents the All-god, and consequently each represents the other."

²⁰ Hopkins, *JAOS* 36 (1916), p. 264.

²¹ R. Otto *Gottheit und Gottheiten der Arier* (1932), p. 83 ff., *Zeitschrift für Missionskunde und Religionswissenschaft* 49 (1936), p. 296 ff. Cf. *Gefühl des Überweltlichen*, p. 111: "Einschlüpfen, a haunting something."

²² *Myth, Ritual and Religion* II, p. 148, quoted by Hillebrandt, *Ved. Myth.* I², p. 1.

²³ *Vedic Mythology*, p. 38. Cf. Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, p. 109: "the solar nature of the deity is reasonably plain."

²⁴ *JRAS* 1895, p. 171.

- 4) stepped widely over the earthly *scil.* regions (*pārthivāni*) with three strides (I.155.4); thrice traversed the earthly regions (*rājāṃsi pārthivāni* VI.49.13),
- 5) thrice traversed this earth (*etām prthivīm* VII.100.3,4),
- 6) strode three (steps) (thither) where the gods rejoice (VIII.29.7).

Some other passages make it clear that the third step is the highest and that mortal men can only see the two lower ones (I.155.5, VII.99.1). This highest step, which is sometimes connected with the third and highest place of Agni (V.3.3, X.1.3),²⁵ is likened to an eye fixed in heaven which singers light up (I.22.20 f.) and is said to shine down greatly (I.154.6). The poet prays that he may attain to that dear abode (I.154.5).

This is the general picture that can be derived from the scattered allusions. For further details the reader may be referred to the manuals. The facts mentioned allow some general conclusions. In the first place it is apparent that to the Rigvedic poets the exact place where these strides were taken was of minor importance: the words *pārthivāni rājāṃsi* (or even *prthivīm* alone) were apparently sufficient to indicate the place of Viṣṇu's act.²⁶ Cf. also AthS. XII.1.10: "(the earth) on which Viṣṇu strode out." In the second place the number three, though traditional, is not the only one mentioned, for sometimes Viṣṇu is said to have stridden over the seven places of the earth.²⁷ Now, three and seven are both numbers which denote totality, and the question arises, if there is sufficient reason for assuming some naturalistic explanation for the number three. Only later, especially in the Yajurveda, are the three steps equated to *prthivī*, *antārikṣam* and *dyaūh* (e.g., VS. 2.25; 12.5, TS. II.4.12.3 ff., V.2.1.1, TB. III.1.2.6; cf. *divó vā viṣṇa(v) utá vā prthivyā mahó vā viṣṇa(v) utá vā 'ntārikṣād* VS TS KS, etc., and see also AthS. VII.26.8, etc.). On the other hand, there occur also quite different interpretations (e.g., AB. VI.15.11), and it remains doubtful, if much weight should be laid on these ritualistic speculations. Still, the correctness of this interpretation, which has found general acceptance in later Hinduism (Mahābhārata, Kālidāsa, etc.), has seldom been questioned. Oldenberg, however, rightly objected that this seemingly simple explanation is at variance with the Rigvedic texts which stress the fact "dass der dritte Schritt ein eigenartiger, erhabenster ist, dass er in geheimnisvolle höchste Höhe führt."²⁸ Cf. *asyá rājasah parāké* (VII.100.5), *tád viṣṇoḥ paramām padām sādā paśyanti sūrāyaḥ | divīva cākṣur ātatam* (I.22.20), *yātra devāso mādanti* (VIII.29.7), *nāro yātra devayāvo mādanti* (I.154.5), *viṣṇoḥ padé paramé mādḥva ūtsaḥ* (I.154.5), *yātra gāvo*

²⁵ Bergaigne, *Religion védique* II, p. 46.

²⁶ See also Oldenberg, *Religion des Veda*, p. 229. Hillebrandt's theory of "verschiedene, bisweilen in dasselbe Lied aufgenommene Traditionen" (*Ved. Myth.* II², p. 317) does not carry conviction.

²⁷ I.22.16 *yāto viṣṇur vicakramé prthivyāḥ sapta dhāmabhiḥ* ("la terre avec ses installations autonomes" Renou, *Etudes védiques* IV, p. 95), cf. VIII.69.7 *sacevahi trīḥ sapta sakhyūḥ padé* "so wollen wir . . . dreimal in den sieben Schritten des Freundes zusammengehen," Geldner. Otherwise VIII.59.5 *trīḥ sapta*.

²⁸ *Religion des Veda*, p. 229 f.

bhūriśṛṅgā ayāsaḥ (6), *viṣṇo deva tvām paramāśya vitse* (VII.99.1), and I.155.5. Other facts corroborate the inference that Viṣṇu's strides are not connected with any natural phenomenon. the words *yā u tridhātu prthivīm utā dyām éko dādadhāra bhūvanāni viśvā* (I.154.4) do not suggest that the poet had the *trīṃś lokāḥ* of the later Veda in mind. Hillebrandt rendered it "der allein Himmel und Erde, je zu dreien, und alle Wesen gehalten hat."²⁹ We might prefer: "who alone supports in a threefold manner Heaven and Earth, all creatures."

For these reasons one can hardly evade the conclusion that in the Rigveda Viṣṇu has no particular connections with the sun. It is possible that the sun, when in the zenith, was associated with Viṣṇu just as the rising sun was a manifestation of Mitra and the setting sun one of Varuṇa (AthS. XIII.3.13). If so, this could account for AthS. XIII.2.31, but the text is not explicit. As for RS. I.155.6, this passage points to a connection with the solar year of 360 days³⁰ but does by no means imply that this year, set in motion like a revolving wheel (*cakrām nā vṛttām*), is directly connected with the sun: in the Brāhmaṇas the year always represents the totality (like Prajāpati), for when time is conceived as a cyclic process, all is contained within the compass of a year. The technical term for setting in motion this cyclic process is *cakrām prā vartayati* ever since RS. I.164.11-14 and the *cakrā-* which soon came to be associated with Viṣṇu (*cakrapāṇi-* ŚvB. V.8.2) is probably the symbol for this progression of the Universe.

On the other hand, it is hard to accept Oldenberg's suggestion that the number three is nothing but a "Wiederspiegelung einer allgemeinen Neigung der Phantasie."³¹

3. With regard to the aim of Viṣṇu's strides the Rigveda is as explicit as one may desire: it may be summarized in the one word "life." Viṣṇu is said to stride out *jīvāse* (VI.69.5), *urugāyāya jīvāse* (I.155.4), *mānave bādhitāya* (VI.49.13). Cf. VI.100.4. Some scholars assign the same act to Indra on the strength of VIII.63.9, but Geldner is apparently right in reading *asyā vṛṣṇo vy ōdanā urū kramiṣṭa jīvāse* (for *vyōdana*): "Er schritt weit aus nach dem Reisbrei, für diesen Bullen zum Leben," so that it becomes an additional testimony for the aboriginal *odana*-myth that has been grafted on the Vedic

²⁹ *Lieder des Rgveda*, p. 89. Not "das Dreifache, d.h., die dreitheilige Welt" (Roth, *PW.* III, col. 933, Ludwig, *Der Rgveda* I, p. 158, Geldner, *Der Rgveda* I, p. 212). It should be noted that *tridhātu* is never used to denote a tripartition of the world: in IV.42.4 *tridhātu prathayad vi bhūma* (as compared with, e.g., VII.36.1, V.87.7, X.62.3, VI.72.2, X.82.1; 149.2, II.10.7, V.58.7, I.62.5, VIII.89.5, I.103.2 = II.15.2) it must be an adverb, as it is in VI.44.21 *tridhātu divi*, VII.5.4 *tāva tridhātu prthivī utā dyaur vāiśvānara vṛatām agne sacanta*, I.34.7 *pāri tridhātu prthivīm aśāyatam* (:8 *tisrāḥ prthivīr*). For *tridhātu* "thrice" see Renou, *Études védiques et pāninéennes* IV, pp. 54, 70. It may be equated to *tridhā* (cf. III.56.6) and *tredhā* (*tredhā nī dadhe padām* I.22.17).

³⁰ Macdonell, *JRAS* 1895, p. 174, f., cf. Oldenberg, *Rgveda, Textkritische und exegetische Noten* I, p. 151.

³¹ *Religion des Veda*, p. 231. These words reflect his "peculiar mental attitude towards myth and ritual" (Held, *The Mahābhārata*, p. 117.)

Vṛtra-myth.³² Cf. further *urusyā ṇa urujmann āprayuchan* (AthS. VI. *hāstau prṇasva bahūbhīr vasāvyaīh* (AthS. VII.26.8). It is not clear, Macdonell³³ holds this motive to be "a secondary trait." The frequency which it is mentioned suggests that it is an authentic feature.

A further characteristic of Viṣṇu is "his friendship for Indra, with whom he is frequently allied in the fight with Vṛtra. This is indicated by the fact that one whole hymn (VI.69) is dedicated to the two deities conjointly and . . . by the fact that in hymns extolling Viṣṇu, Indra is the only deity incidentally associated with him either explicitly (VII.99.5-6; I.11.1) or implicitly (VII.99.4; I.154.6, 155.1; cp. I.67.7)."³⁴ Viṣṇu's assistance in the fight with Vṛtra has created some surprise. Oldenberg held this to be "nur in einer ganz auf der Oberfläche liegenden Anähnlichung an Indra." Others tried to explain this alliance between the two gods from their supposed natural substratum. Thus Gonda, who accepts the traditional explanation of the three strides as referring to the diurnal ascent of the sun through the atmosphere to the zenith (and more particularly, to the sun's energy pervading, omnipresent, and fecundating stream of light and energy) suggests that "Viṣṇu's acting as Indra's companion or assistant in fighting Vṛtra may be interpreted as reflecting ancient ideas with regard to the power given by the power inhering in sunlight to the weather-god when the latter is about to destroy the demon who precludes the waters from fertilizing the soil."³⁵ Similarly Griswold tried to connect the functions of lightning and the sun, which he supposed to be personified by Indra and Viṣṇu.³⁷ A third theory explains the mythical association of Viṣṇu and Indra as the result of a historical union of the Viṣṇu-worshippers and the Indra-worshippers.³⁸ How is there any reason to suppose that Viṣṇu's rôle as Indra's "assistant" is different from his general salutary activity in behalf of Mankind and the Universe? The answer will to a large extent depend on one's views as to Indra's character. Without entering into this problem I should like to draw attention to a passage which seems never to have been discussed in earlier studies on Viṣṇu. RS. I.156.4cd reads as follows:

*dādhāra dākṣam uttamām aharvīdam
vrajām ca viṣṇuḥ sākḥivāṃ apornutē*

"Er besitzt höchsten Verstand, der den richtigen Tag ausfindig macht, Viṣṇu in Begleitung des Freundes den Rinderpferschlüssel aufschliesst."³⁹

³² *Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, Letterkunde, Nieuwe Reeks, Deel 13, No. 7 (1950).*

³³ *Vedic Mythology*, p. 39.

³⁴ Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 39.

³⁵ *Religion des Veda* 231.

³⁶ *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism*, p. 60. For Indra as a weather-god see also p. 31, as to his sending power in nature, see p. 172.

³⁷ *The Religion of the R̥gveda*, p. 285 n.1.

³⁸ Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie* II², p. 313.

³⁹ Transl. Geldner. For the accent of *apornutē* see Oldenberg, *ZDMG* 60, p. 733.

mythological significance of the phrase *vrajām apa-ūr-* becomes clear by a comparison with IV.51.2 *vy ũ vṛajāśya tāmaso dvārochāntīr avrañ chūcayaḥ pāvakāḥ* (cf. VI.62.11).⁴⁰ If Viṣṇu was credited with the act of opening the nether world along with his friend, he must accordingly have taken part in the process of creation. To this same conclusion points the word *aharvid-*. No matter, whether it is translated "knowing the (right) day"—which meaning nearly all authorities assign to it—, or rather "finding the day" (cf. *svarvid-* "finding the sun," *gātuvīd-* "finding a way [out of a critical situation]"), the word in any case seems to point to a definite day. In VIII.5.21 it also occurs associated with the idea of the opening of doors: *utā no divyā īśa utā sindhūmr aharvidā | āpa dvāreva varṣathaḥ* "und schliesset uns die himmlischen Labungen und die Ströme auf wie die Tore, ihr Zeitenkenner!" (Geldner). It should be noted that Grassmann's rendering by "der Tage kundig" has been accepted by Böhrtlingk and Geldner.⁴¹ But his further explanation "für seine Handlungen die rechten Tage oder Zeiten wissend," which calls to mind the classical expression *deśakālaḥ*-, hardly defines the meaning intended by the Vedic poets. If it means "knowing the right day" we may rather connect it with such phrases as I.123.9 *jānaty āhnaḥ prathamāsya nāma*. But since in VIII.8.7 the Āsṛins are also addressed as *svarvidā* "finding the sun [of the new year]," it would seem more natural to render *aharvidā* in VIII.5.9, 21 by "finding the [first] day [of the new year]."⁴² If this conclusion is correct, the words *dāksam aharvidam* indicate that Viṣṇu takes a part in the cosmogonical act of finding the sun in the darkness of the nether world and furnish an indication as to the time at which Viṣṇu was thought to take his three strides.⁴³

4. Before discussing the number three itself, it is necessary first to pay some attention to Viṣṇu's place in the cosmic classificatory system. As Held rightly remarks: "The gods cannot be explained, it is true, from the classification-system, but we can understand them through it."⁴⁴ In three Atharvavedic hymns (III.27, XII.3, XV.14) nearly the same classification is met with, viz.:

	N.	
	Soma	
W.		E.
Varuṇa		Agni (XV.14.1: Maruts)
	S.	
	Indra	

⁴⁰ See *IIJ* IV, p. 226.

⁴¹ Translation of VIII.5.9: "die Tage kennend"; Glossar: "die Opfertage (oder die Tageszeiten) kennend, opferkundig."

⁴² Cf. Ludwig: "Tagfinder."

⁴³ Unfortunately the passage VIII.66.10 is too obscure to allow an inference as to *ahardīś-* (parallel to *svardīś-*?).

⁴⁴ G. J. Held, *The Mahābhārata*, p. 222.

Indra's connection with the southern quarter, though found also elsewhere, is remarkable. In addition to these four quarters the *ūrdhvā dīk* is always imparted to Brhaspati, and the *dhruvā dīk* to Viṣṇu (see AthS. III.27.5, XII.3.59, XV.14.5). What exactly is meant by the *dhruvā dīk* becomes clear from such parallel phrases as *āvācī dīk* MS. II.13.21 (p. 167) and *iyām dīk* TS. V.5.10.2, TB. III.11.5.3 (= *adharā dīk*, Comm.). Cf. also *adhāstāt* AthS. IV.40.5, *ihā* TS. V.5.10.4 (corresponding to *dhruvāyām dīśī* AthS. III.26.5)⁴⁵ and *asyām dhruvāyām madhyamāyām pratiṣṭhāyām dīśī* AB. VIII.14.3. It is accordingly the cosmic center and the nadir with which Viṣṇu is associated. The parallel texts of the Yajurveda show some variations. The northern quarter is here allotted to Varuṇa (resp. *Mitrāvāruṇau*) and the western quarter to Soma.⁴⁶ The reason for this most abnormal division, which apparently is a later corruption of the normal system as represented in the Atharvaveda, is unknown. As for the *dhruvā dīk*, MS. agrees with AthS. in associating it with Viṣṇu, while TS. and TB. have respectively Yama⁴⁷ and Aditi instead.

Now, the mythological meaning of the center has long been known: it represents the totality of the parts distributed over the four quarters. So we are driven to the conclusion that at an early date Viṣṇu occupied a more *central* position than either Indra or Varuṇa, who are the protagonists of the opposed groups of Devas and Asuras and thus stand each for one of the moieties only. In contrast with them, Viṣṇu must consequently represent the unity of the two antagonistic parties, upper world and nether world. He stands for, and *is*, each of the two worlds (just as later he is, in a way, the heavenly bird Garuḍa and the serpent of the subterranean waters Śeṣa), but under the aspect of their unity, like Prajāpati. In AthS. X.10.30 the cosmic cow is said to be Heaven and Earth (i.e., the totality of the Universe), Viṣṇu and Prajāpati. In XIX.17.9; 18.9 the *dhruvā dīk* is associated with Prajāpati and *pratiṣṭhā*, in XVIII.3.25 with a god Dhartṛ.

Being related to both worlds, Viṣṇu also belongs to the gods of the nether world. In AthS. XI.6.2 he is invoked along with Varuṇa, Mitra, Bhaga, Aṁśa and Vivasvant for deliverance from distress (*ānhas-*). It may have some importance, therefore, that Viṣṇu and Varuṇa are sometimes addressed conjointly⁴⁸ and that the mythical bird Suparṇa, the prototype of Garuḍa, is said to be *Vāruṇasya dūtām*, *Yamāsya yónau* (RS. X.123.6). This explains why Viṣṇu's position in the cosmogonical Vṛtra-fight was of the utmost importance and at the same time fundamentally ambiguous: his was to some extent the position and the rôle which in other mythologies is attributed to the divine trickster.⁴⁹ He could not fight the powers of the nether world,

⁴⁵ Hauer's doubts (*Festschrift Winternitz*, p. 144, n.1) do not seem justified.

⁴⁶ TS. V.5.10.2, MS. II.13.21 (p. 167, 3, 5 f.), TB. III.11.5.2.

⁴⁷ In the Mahābhārata Viṣṇu is Yama, see Hopkins, *Epic Mythology*, p. 207.

⁴⁸ Cf. AthS. VII.25.1,2 (cf. IX.2.6), KS. XIII.4 (p. 184, 7, 10), MS. IV.14.6 (p. 223, 1, 5, 9, 12), TS. II.1.4.4, TB. II.8.4.4 ff. See Hillebrandt, *Ved. Myth.* II², pp. 69, 325.

⁴⁹ See J. P. B. de Josselin de Jong, *De Oorsprong van den goddelijken bedrieger* (Mede-

as Indra did, because these too were part of his essence. His natural place (like Prajāpati's)⁵⁰ was *between* the two parties, as indeed his position is during the Churning of the Ocean.⁵¹ Viṣṇu is the typical *madhyasthaḥ*, the connecting link between the two cosmic moieties, reflexes of which concept may be recognized in such ritualistic speculations as SB. III.4.4.15: Agni is the day, Soma the night, and Viṣṇu "what is between the two" (*yád antareṇa*), or KS. XXV.1 (p. 102, 13 ff.) *agnim śrīgaṇi, somaṁ śalyaṁ, viṣṇuṁ tejanam* (the shaft of the arrow). The factual importance of such identifications may be slight, but such passages show that the authors were quite aware of the *structural* function of Viṣṇu as the connecting link. In passing it may be called to mind that in later times Viṣṇu was (and still is) believed to stay for four months in the nether world, where he sleeps on Śeṣa in the subterranean waters and that, in contrast with other gods, he is endowed with two *vāhanas* which, while being at variance with each other, at the same time stress by their relationship the totalitarian character of the god. From a purely mythological point of view Viṣṇu, who by his position in the center must also in Vedic belief have been immediately associated with the cosmic pillar (*Skambhā*), must have ascended along this pillar at the beginning of the year and descended in the second half of it⁵² but, owing perhaps to the fact that the texts are primarily concerned with the beginning of the new year, they do not contain any reference to such a belief.

5. That the mythological concept of the nether world was associated with the earth appears from the fact that TB. III.1.5.3 substitutes Aditi for Viṣṇu as the divinity presiding over the nadir. The scholion to this passage has the following comment: *iyam digl ity anenā 'dharā dik pradarśyate; aditir] bhūmī tasyā diśo devatā*.⁵³ This may account for Viṣṇu's connection with the plants. According to JB. I.181²⁻³ the gods won from the Asuras the cow and the horse through Indra-Varuṇa, the goat and the sheep through Indra-Bṛhas-

deelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afd. Letterkunde, Deel 68, Serie B, N° 1 [1929]).

⁵⁰ See *IJJ* V, p. 58 and cf. *JB*. I.19 *tān . . . antarā vikramyā 'tiṣṭhat*.

⁵¹ According to the Mahābhārata I.16.13 f. (*crit. ed.*) the Asuras held the head of the serpent, and the Devas its tail, but *ananto bhagavān devo yato, Nārāyaṇas tataḥ*, that is Viṣṇu, who is mythically identical with Śeṣa, his nether world aspect, is the connecting link between the two parties. He stands between them, e.g., on the reliefs of Angkor Vat, but also in modern representations (cf. e.g., the frontispiece in *Mumbai sabhā-caranuṁ pañcāṅga*, saṁvat 1978). Since the Asuras are the elder brothers of the Devas (*Mhbh.* XII.34.13 *crit. ed.*: *asurā bhrātaro jyeṣṭhā devās cāpi yavīyasaḥ*), it is interesting to note that among the Papuas of Waropen (New Guinea) the cooperation and rivalry between two non-exogamous groups is seen as the head and the tail of a triton shell, the head being the clan of the "elder brother" and the tail the clan of the "younger brother." See G. J. Held, *Papoea's van Waropen*, Leiden 1947, p. 49 f. (as summarized by Milner, *BSOAS* XXII, p. 180).

⁵² Cf. in the Edda the squirrel on the trunk of Yggdrasil, who "shall bear the eagle's words from above and say them to Niðhogger [the dragon] below" (*Grímnismál* 32).

⁵³ For Aditi and the Earth, see Macdonell, *Ved. Myth.*, p. 121, Agrawala, *Indian Culture* 4 (1938), p. 407.

pati, but rice and barley (*vr̥hiṃ ca yavaṃ ca*) through Indra-Viṣṇu.⁵⁴ With the nadir are associated earth and fire, herbs (*śadhi-*), forest trees, and plants (*virūdh-*), AthS. XV.6.1; herbs, III.26.5, XII.3.59 (but Paippalāda: food and plants respectively), Viṣṇu and plants, III.27.5. It may be added that the earth is *mātdram śadhinām dhruvām bhūmim prthivīm*, XII.1.17. Viṣṇu and the nadir are connected with Virāj, XV.14.5, who again is associated with food,⁵⁵ and with Aditi (*āditim virājam* VS. 13.43, cf. AthS. XII.3.11). To the same relation points AthS. II.12.1 *kṣétrasya pátiny urugāyó 'dbhutaḥ* (cf. RS. VII.35.10d *kṣétrasya pátih* beside Viṣṇu in 9c?). It is not surprising, therefore, that in the Yajurveda, which particularly stresses the chthonic character of Aditi, she is called *Viṣṇupatni*,⁵⁶ as are also Virāj⁵⁷ and *dhruvā dik*.⁵⁸ A discussion of Aditi lies outside the scope of this article,⁵⁹ but it may be pointed out that she is sometimes equated also with Heaven and Earth.⁶⁰ Heesterman holds her to be identical with Anumati,⁶¹ who is opposed to Nirṛti, the "personified representation of the cover of the embryo." This may be one of the sources of Viṣṇu's special connection with women.⁶²

6. As far as I see, Professor W. Norman Brown has been the first to state that Indra's fight with Vṛtra is a creation myth.⁶³ Since the R̥gveda connects Viṣṇu's three strides with Indra's slaying of the serpent demon, we are driven to the conclusion that Viṣṇu's act must somehow belong to the same mythical context.⁶⁴ Several well-known authorities, however, have felt unable to accept this conclusion. Hillebrandt held the association of Viṣṇu with Indra to be quite irrelevant: "Die drei Schritte, die er z.B. IV.18.11; VIII.12.27; 52.3 für Indra tut, sind eine ganz überflüssige Sache und hier

⁵⁴ For these three groups of gods see below, p. 150 and cf. AB. III. 50, ĀśvŚ. VI. 1, Eggeling, *SBE*. 26, p. 429, n. 1.

⁵⁵ *annam virāt*, e.g., *JB*. II.158¹⁰. See M. Mauss, *Mélanges S. Lévi* (1911), p. 333, Hauer, *Festschrift Winternitz*, p. 144, n.1, Hopkins, *Epic Mythology* 78, Gonda, *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism*, p. 67 (*virāj* = totality).

⁵⁶ VS. 29.60, TS. IV.4.12.5, VII.5.14.1, TB. III.1.2.6, ĀśvŚ. IV.12.2. For Viṣṇu and Aditi in the ritual see Caland, *Altindische Zauberei*, p. 112. In the epic the earth is *Vaiṣṇavī* (Hopkins, *Epic Mythology*, p. 80).

⁵⁷ KS. XXII.14 (p. 70, 20).

⁵⁸ MS. III.16.4 (p. 189, 16), TS. IV.4.12.5 *dhruvā diśām viṣṇupatny āghorā 'syēśānā sáhaso yā manótā*.

⁵⁹ See, e.g., Bergaigne, *Religion védique* III, p. 88 ff., Max Müller, *SBE*. 32, p. 241 ff., Vodskov, *Sjæledyrkelsen og Naturdyrkelsen*, pp. 321-73, Keith, *Indian Culture*, III, pp. 721-30, V. S. Agrawala, *Indian Culture* IV, pp. 401-409, Kuiper, *De goddelijke Moeder in de Voor-Indische religie* (1939).

⁶⁰ Cf. Macdonell, *Ved. Myth.*, p. 121, TS. I.5.11.5, IV.4.12.5, KS. XXIII.8 (p. 83, 19), and Heesterman (see next note), p. 202.

⁶¹ J. C. Heesterman, *The Ancient Indian Royal Consecration* (1957), p. 18.

⁶² See Gonda, *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism*, p. 19 ff.

⁶³ *JAOS* 61 (1941), p. 79; vol. 62 (1942), p. 98. For further references see *IJJ* IV (1960), p. 218, n.6.

⁶⁴ For the ancient Indian concept of creation as a process of arranging the primordial matter see, e.g., Held, *The Mahābhārata*, p. 118.

auf den Vrtrakampf aus dem viṣṇuitischen Sagenkreise übernommen, um beide aus irgendeinem für die Verehrer wichtigen Grunde miteinander zu verknüpfen.”⁶⁵ Oldenberg expressed a similar opinion, “Aber wie die vedischen Dichter es lieben, die Taten, welche die Ordnung der Welt und das glückliche Dasein der Menschheit begründen, mit dem Vrtrasieg in Verbindung zu setzen, so muss hier Viṣṇu zugleich mit der Vrtratötung das vollbringen, was die ihm eigene Tat ist: er muss weit ausschreiten und dadurch Indra das grosse Schlachtfeld für seinen Sieg schaffen.”⁶⁶ It may be objected that Viṣṇu’s act cannot be said to be “superfluous” as long as its real character is not understood, and that the existence of *separate* Viṣṇuite sagas is an unproved theory.⁶⁷ Others have rightly explained the connection between both acts from the character of the two gods (see above, p. 142). We therefore start from the following assumptions which seem to us sufficiently warranted:

1) The myth of Indra’s fight with Vṛtra refers to the creation of the organized cosmos, consisting of upper and nether world.

2) Viṣṇu’s mythical act, accomplished like Indra’s for the welfare of the world, and sometimes directly connected with it, is also likely to form part of this creation act.

3) The poets do not lay much stress on the places where the steps were taken, the most important trait of the myth apparently being their number.

4) In the Rīgveda the third step was conceived as quite mysterious and invisible to the human eye. Later theological speculations often try to find some correlate in the phenomenal world for such mythological concepts (as in the case of the inverted tree).⁶⁸

5) In spite of such assonances as *sákhe viṣṇo vitarām ví kramasva*⁶⁹ the prevailing idea with respect to Viṣṇu’s three strides seems to have been that of an ascension. There is no doubt as to the third step being the highest. Reference to this ascension is met with in VIII.69.7 *úd yád bradhñasya viṣṭápaṃ índraś ca gánvahi* “wenn ich und Indra, wir beide, nach Hause zur Höhe der Sonne hinaufsteigen.”⁷⁰ Geldner is probably right in taking st. 7 and 16 (*ádha dyukṣám sacevahi!*) as spoken by Viṣṇu: in that case the idea of Indra’s ascension must be due to his association with Viṣṇu.⁷¹ The same idea of ascension associated with Viṣṇu also accounts for his being an *unnetṛ-*; cf. JB.II.68¹ *unnetar un mā naye ’ty āha, viṣṇur vā unnetā, yajño vai viṣṇuḥ,*

⁶⁵ *Vedische Mythologie* II², p. 313.

⁶⁶ *Religion des Veda*, p. 231.

⁶⁷ The fundamental weakness of such theories has rightly been censured by Norman O. Brown, *Am. J. Arch.* 53 (1949), p. 218, in the words: “The history of religion is conceived as a blind diffusion and collision of tribal traditions, with little or no regard for the functional interrelationship between religious institutions and the total culture of which they form a part.”

⁶⁸ See *Bijdragen Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde* 107, p. 80 ff.

⁶⁹ Oldenberg, *Nachrichten Gött. Akad. Wiss.* 1915, p. 374. In view of the “magical” use of repetition and assonance in prayers and exhortations to the gods (e.g., VS. 9.9 *vājino vājajito vājam sariṣyántaḥ*, RS. I.124.13 *ástoḍhvam stomyā(h)*, I.113.18 *uśatīr uśāsaḥ*, 19 *jāne janaya*) no argument can be derived from the use of *ví* for the etymology of *Viṣṇu-*.

⁷⁰ Cf., e.g., comm. on PB. XVIII.7.13: *bradhñasya* *ādityasya viṣṇurūpasya*.

⁷¹ St. 14 refers to Indra and Viṣṇu. Cf. also Oldenberg’s note on st. 15 and see below p. 151.

yajña evai 'nam tat sarvasmāt pāpmano vimucyo 'nnayati⁷² and MānGS. I.11.18 *Viṣṇus tvām unnayatu*,⁷³ and especially for the identification of Viṣṇu and the sacrifice.

7. The main problem with which one is confronted when trying to understand the real character of Viṣṇu's strides has never been clearly stated. On the one hand there has been a tendency, ever since the oldest Yajurvedic texts and the pre-Yāska interpreters of the Rigveda, to connect them with the triple division of the universe. On the other hand it cannot be doubted that, whatever may be the origin of this threefold division, the cosmological concept upon which the Vedic (and particularly the Rigvedic) mythology is mainly based is that of a cosmic dichotomy. The Vedic conception of the universe centers about the oppositions of Heaven-Earth, Day-Night, Devas-Asuras: "twofold indeed is this (universe), there is no third" (ŚB. III.3.2.2).⁷⁴ So, quite apart from other considerations, the dual division is likely to be earlier than the tripartite one,⁷⁵ and the ritualistic interpretation of the Yajurveda (e.g., VS.2.25 *divi viṣṇur vyākramiṣṭa . . . antārikṣe . . . pṛthivyām*) may not reflect the mythical meaning. The same is true of the Iranian interpretation in the Dēnkart.⁷⁶ From the survey of the Rigvedic passages (above p. 139) it emerges that the poets *never* refer to this triple division: they rather had the dual conception in mind, e.g., I.154.4 *yā u tridhātu pṛthivīm utā dyām éko dādhāra bhūvanāni víśvā*, where Viṣṇu is said to hold in a threefold way Earth and Heaven, *all* that exists.

For a correct interpretation we must start from the mythical significance of the number three in Vedic thought.⁷⁷ It has long been observed that the predominant role of the number five in the Veda (cf. *pāñca jánāḥ*, *pāñca kṛṣṭīḥ*, *pāñca carṣanīḥ*, *pāñca kṣitīḥ*) is due to the fact that the five points of the compass (*pāñca pradīśaḥ* IX.86.29) "represent in the Vedic scriptures the entire world."⁷⁸ When five points are occasionally mentioned, that in the middle, where the speaker stands (*madhyatāḥ* RS. X.42.11), denotes the fifth.⁷⁹

⁷² But in MS. I.3.39 (p. 46, 4) *únnetar vāsīyo nā únnayā 'bhi*, KS. IV.13 (p. 38, 9) *únnetar vāsīyo 'bhyúnnayā naḥ*, KKS. III.11 (p. 35, 9) *unnetar vasyo 'dhyunnayā naḥ* there is no reference to Viṣṇu.

⁷³ But this formula is a "correction" of *Viṣṇus tvān etu* TB. ĀpŚ. (cf. TS. III.2.6.1 *Viṣṇus tvānu ví cakrame*). Note the use of *un-nī-* as the technical term for the erection of the *yūpa* (RS. III.8.4, 9).

⁷⁴ Otherwise I.2.1.12; 2.4.21 (S. Lévi, *La Doctrine du sacrifice*, p. 92).

⁷⁵ Held, *The Mahābhārata*, p. 141.

⁷⁶ See above, p. 140. For the three strides of the priest in the Zoroastrian religion see Dumézil, *Orientalia Suecana* V (1956), p. 14, Haggerty Krappe, *Mythologie universelle*, p. 165 f. (cf. Darmesteter, *Le Zend-Avesta* I, p. 401, Hillebrandt, *Neu-und Vollmondsopfer*, p. 171 f.).

⁷⁷ No mention will be made of such general studies as, e.g., Usener, *Dreiheit*, Rheinisches Museum 58 (1903), p. 12 ff., W. B. Kristensen, *Kringloop en Totaliteit* (Verzamelde Bijdragen, p. 231, esp. p. 281 ff.).

⁷⁸ Held, *The Mahābhārata*, p. 120.

⁷⁹ Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 9.

Indeed, as Held remarks, "the number of the whole is obtained by continually adding one to the whole already obtained."⁸⁰ The correctness of this observation is evident from such instances as pointed out by Heesterman:⁸¹ the "sixteenth round" (*ṣoḍaśin-graha-*) added as an extra element to a total made up of fifteen parts "not only exceeds but also encompasses the preceding fifteen-partite totality." Cf. AB. IV.1.4 "with the *ṣoḍaśin* as a *vajra* he encompasses (goes round, surrounds: *parigachati*) cattle." Prajāpati and the year (which is the all-encompassing totality) are often connected with the number seventeen; in ŚB. X.4.1.16 this is explained as being 16 plus one, Prajāpati himself being the seventeenth. (Similarly JB. II.104⁶: *trayastrīṃśam eva pītarām Prajāpatim*). In KB. XIX.2 the thirteenth month is said to stand for the whole year: *etāwān vai saṃvatsaro yad eṣa trayodaśo māsaś, tad atraiva sarvaḥ saṃvatsara āpto bhavati*.

Now it has long been clear that Viṣṇu's three strides are somehow connected with the totality of the universe, but it has never been expressly stated, what exactly is the mythical significance of the third step. Its explanation must be sought in the cosmogony, i.e., in the creation myth. In the beginning there was the undifferentiated primeval world consisting of the waters⁸² and the beginning of the primordial hill, which the cosmogonical boar had dug up out of the waters.⁸³ Heaven still lay on the earth.⁸⁴ By slaying Vṛtra, Indra rivets the hill, opens it, and "props up" (*stabh-*) the sky:⁸⁵ thereby the dual organization of the cosmos is created. But at the same moment Viṣṇu "strides out": his first step corresponds to the nether world (which includes the earth), his second step to the upper world, but his third step is a mystery, not perceptible to the human eye, for it corresponds to the totality of the opposed moieties, just as the thirteenth month stands for the totality of the preceding twelve months. All that exists, is in the three steps, or in the third that represents them. Hence it may be asked whether *tēsu* (scil. *triṣū padēsu*) *vīśvaṃ bhūvanam ā viveśāḥ* (VS.23.49). As compared with the *thesis* of the primordial world, and the *antithesis* of Indra's creation, Viṣṇu's third step is the *synthesis*. In later ritualistic speculations this idea can sometimes still be traced, e.g., Indra got two parts of Vṛtra's *indriyaṃ vīryam*, but Viṣṇu the third (JB. II.243). When the Asuras had stolen the *rasa* and *vīrya* of the sacrifice, Indra regained one-third with the help of Varuṇa, one third with Bṛhaspati, but the last third with Viṣṇu's assistance: "thus they excluded

⁸⁰ Held, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

⁸¹ *The ancient Indian royal Consecration*, p. 13 f.

⁸² *salilām apraketām*, e.g., RS. X.129.3, AthS. XII.1.8, TS. V.6.4.2, VII.1.5.1, TB. I.1.3.5, II.2.9.3, KS. VIII.2 (p. 84, 14), XXII.9 (p. 65, 13), JB. III.360⁹, ŚB. XI. 1.6.1, etc.

⁸³ In Yajurveda, e.g., KS. VIII.2 (p. 84, 14), cf. MS. I.6.3 (p. 90, 4), TS. VII.1.5.1, TB. I.1.3.6, ŚB. XIV.1.2.11; otherwise JB. III.360¹¹, AitUp. I.3, ŚB. VI. 1.1.12, etc.

⁸⁴ AB. IV.27.5, JB. III.361⁴, PB. VII.10.1, TS. III.4.3.1, ŚB. I.4.1.21 f., III.2.1.2. See Geldner, *Der Rigveda in Auswahl II* (Kommentar), p. 113.

⁸⁵ Cf., e.g., Geldner's note on his translation of VII.86.1.

them from *all*” (*tān sarvasmād evā 'ntarāyan*, JB. I.180). Here, as in the passage from I.181 mentioned above, Varuṇa apparently stands for the Asuras and the nether world, Bṛhaspati for the Devas and the upper world, and Viṣṇu for the totality.⁸⁶

8. The difference between the current view of the Vedic god and the one here advocated is apparent. According to the former view Viṣṇu was in the R̥gveda a mere assistant of the great Indra, who gradually gained in importance, finally to rise to the paramount position of mankind's Savior.⁸⁷ In our opinion Viṣṇu, far from being a mere assistant, must have been conceived mythologically as standing between the two parties in the Vṛtra-fight, just as he stood in an ambiguous position between Asuras and Devas in the *amṛtamanthana*, and to some extent also as Kṛṣṇa stood in the battle of the Mahābhārata.⁸⁸ I may be permitted to quote here some words written many years ago: “Just as it is said in the epic that that party will be victorious with which Kṛṣṇa sides (*yataḥ Kṛṣṇas tato jayaḥ*, Mhbh. VI.21.12, crit. ed.), so we shall have to attribute a far more fundamental importance to Viṣṇu's seemingly insignificant rôle in Indra's Vṛtra-fight than earlier Vedic scholars like Hillebrandt and Oldenberg were ready to admit: the two-sidedness of Viṣṇu's nature is apparently the determinant factor which alone could incline the balance in the combat of the cosmic moieties.”⁸⁹ Viṣṇu, no less than Indra, was considered a victor (RS. VI.69.8, JB.II.242 f.). Unlike Indra, however, who apparently came “from nowhere,” he originally belonged to the nether world, though representing (like Aditi and Anumati) its auspicious aspect, which was opposed to *ānhas-*. He rose up from the center at the very moment when the dual world was being created, and so he is connected with the pillar which now supports the sky. Just as this pillar connects Heaven and Earth “like an axle two wheels,”⁹⁰ so Viṣṇu is the connecting link, which forms part of both worlds (see p. 145). As the sacrifice strode forth from (or through?) the *skambhā-*,⁹¹ so Viṣṇu as the sacrifice ascends to the sky and transmits the powers of the earth to the heavenly gods. Rönnow character-

⁸⁶ Of course no argument can be derived from these speculations, as in many others the meaning of the number three is no longer known: in VS. IX.31-32, TS. I.7.11.1 Viṣṇu is associated with three syllables, but the highest number is here seventeen syllables, connected with Prajāpati. In JB. I.156 the gods are said to have overcome the Asuras with two *savanas*, after which Indra alone accomplishes the third *savana* (which in I.180 is connected with Indra-Viṣṇu!).

⁸⁷ E.g., Gonda, *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism*, p. 163 (cf. p. 30 f.). But on p. 32 he is stated to be equal in rank to Indra (see also Keith, *Religion and Philosophy*, p. 109).

⁸⁸ On Kṛṣṇa as the divine trickster see Held, *The Mahābhārata*, p. 299, Hopkins, *Epic Mythology*, p. 215. In the Veda only Viṣṇu, as representing the total Universe, could induce the sky to “make room” for Indra's vajra: Bṛhaddevatā VI.123 *udyatasyaiva vajrasya dyaur dadātu mamā 'ntaram*.

⁸⁹ *Bijdragen Koninklijk Instituut* 107 (1951), p. 77.

⁹⁰ RS. X.89.4 *yó ákṣeṇeva cakrīyā śácībhir vīṣvak tastāmbha prthivīm utá dyām* (said of Indra).

⁹¹ AthS. X.7.16 *yajñó yātra párákrāntaḥ* (differently, Lindepau, *ZII. III*, p. 236).

ized him as the Soma-god *par excellence*:⁹² the words with which the poet addresses Viṣṇu and Indra in VI.69.6 “ye two are the [primeval] ocean, the bowl which contains the Soma”⁹³ must primarily refer to Viṣṇu (like those in the preceding stanza *sómasya máda urú cakramāthe*, see Hillebrandt, *Ved. Myth.* II, p. 316, and those in VIII.69.7, see above, p. 147). Indeed, Viṣṇu presses the Soma for Indra (I.22.1), and later texts state that the Soma belongs to Viṣṇu (*sómo vaiṣṇavó* ŚB. XIII.4.3.8). His is apparently the mythical Soma bowl (*kaláśa-*), like the *mád̥hwa útsaḥ* (I.154.5). Viṣṇu might also be called the god of *pravṛtti-* or cosmic progression⁹⁴ but while Held rightly remarks that *nivṛtti-* (regression) was also the movement of Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa in later Hinduism, “the sleeping Viṣṇu, symbol of life that has ceased from activity and become merged in death,”⁹⁵ references to this belief are lacking in the Veda. On the other hand there is clear evidence of Viṣṇu’s connection with the mountains: he is “dwelling” or “standing” on the mountain(s) and “regent of the mountains.”⁹⁶ The specific mythological significance of the mountains (or mountain!) in the Vṛtra-myth is the primeval hill,⁹⁷ and if the concept of Uṣas dwelling on the surface of the mountain (*adriśānu-*) has rightly been associated with her cosmogonical appearance, Viṣṇu’s epithets will also have to be referred to the god’s epiphany: he stands on the summit of the mountain (I.155.1).⁹⁸ Particularly remarkable is I.154.2: “Because of this his mighty deed is Viṣṇu lauded, like some fierce beast that is much dreaded, That wanders as it lists, that haunts the mountains.”⁹⁹ Since he assumed different forms (VII.100.6) it may be asked if the *mrgó bhīmad̥h* may perhaps be his serpent form (cf. VIII.93.14, V.32.3; 34.2). Later art represents him standing on Mount Mandara, and arising from it as the cosmic pillar. In the middle of the seventh century, A.D., an artist at Māmalapuram portrayed the god, while taking his three strides, as being the supporting pillar of the Universe.¹⁰⁰

⁹² Trita Āptya (I), p. 93.

⁹³ *samudrá sthaḥ kaláśaḥ somadhānaḥ*.

⁹⁴ See Held, *op. cit.*, p. 128 and see above, note 19.

⁹⁵ Held, p. 145. See especially Hopkins, *Epic Mythology*, p. 207 on Viṣṇu as *saṃhartr-*.

⁹⁶ *giriḥṣīt-* I.154.3, *giriṣṭhā-* 2, *viṣṇuḥ párvatānām* (scil. *ádhipatiḥ*), TS. III.4.5.1. Doubtful is VS. 16.29 *námo giriśayāya ca śipiviṣṭāya ca*, which Mahidhara refers to Śiva.

⁹⁷ See *IJJ* IV, pp. 219, 222.

⁹⁸ (Indra-Viṣṇu) *yā sánuni párvatānām . . . tasthátur*; cf. V.87.4 *ádhi śṇúbhir* and see *IJJ* IV, p. 226 on *adriśānu-*, epithet of Uṣas.

⁹⁹ An explanation of Viṣṇu’s relation to the mountains has been suggested by Oldenberg, *Gött. Nachrichten* 1915, p. 375, and (for Kṛṣṇa) by R. Otto, *Zeitschrift für Missionskunde und Religionswissenschaft*, 49/10 (1934), p. 293. Neither seems plausible.

¹⁰⁰ E.g., Stella Kramrisch, *The Art of India*, v. 206. Cf. AthS. X.7.32; 35; 38; 41.

4. THE BLISS OF AŠA

1. The first stanza of Zarathustra's Song of the Choice (Y. 30.1), in spite of countless translations and interpretations, still continues to present considerable difficulties to modern interpreters. The vulgate text reads:

<i>aṭ tā vaxšyā išəntō</i>	<i>yā mazdāθā hyaṭcīṭ vīdušē</i>
<i>staotācā ahurāi</i>	<i>yesnyācā vaṇhēuš manayhō</i>
<i>humazdrā ašā yecā</i>	<i>yā raocēbiš darəsataṭ urvāzā¹</i>

A normalized Old Iranian reconstruction of it would be much as follows:

<i>[āt tā vaxšyā išantah</i>	<i>yā mazdāθā yat cit vīdušai</i>
<i>stautā ca ahurahya</i>	<i>yasniyā ca vahauš manahah</i>
<i>humanzdrā </i>	<i>yā raucahβiš darsataṭ vrāzā]</i>

It goes without saying that such a reconstruction is only approximate and cannot replace the vulgate text. It is not certain, for instance, if (and if so, in which positions) Zarathustra pronounced voiced fricatives for [b, d, g].² On the other hand [vrāzā] instead of [rvāzā]³ has only tentatively been assigned to this dialect on account of the early date which the present writer is inclined to ascribe to Zarathustra.⁴ In justification of this pro-

¹ The reading of the MSS. is indeed *raocēbiš*, not *raocabiš* (Schlerath, *OLZ*, 57 [1962], col. 574).

² For references see Duchesne-Guillemin's account of Old Iranian studies in *Kratylos*, 7 (1962), p. 7, Benveniste, *Etudes sur la langue ossète*, p. 18.

³ The metathesis *vr->rv-* must be of comparatively early date, see Tedesco, *ZII*, II (1923), p. 53 f. (evidence from Syrian), Karl Hoffmann, *Altiranisch*, p. 12 (Median and Elamite evidence), and Benveniste, *Etudes sur la langue ossète*, p. 35. Parallel developments are found in, e.g., Cyprian *puēiva* for **puṇiva* = *āpva* (Hesychius) and in Old Frisian *ruald*, *rwald* for *wwald* "world". According to a French grammar from 1595 English written "se prononce comme si r étoit devant w". See K. Fokkema, *Uit het spel der klanken, Enige beschouwingen uit de friese klankleer* (1952), p. 20.

⁴ See *III*, V (1961), p. 43. The same early date that was assigned to Zarathustra by D'jakonov and Oranskij is now assumed also by K. Rudolph, *Numen*, 8 (1961), p. 81 ff., and Eilers, *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*³, s.v. "Zarathustra", to whom Schlerath, *OLZ*, 57 (1962), col. 583, refers.

cedure of reconstruction it may, however, be suggested that many unacceptable interpretations would not have been offered if the translators had taken care first to explain what, in their opinion, the original text had been.

One of the textual problems of *Y.* 30.1 is the form *ahurāi* in the second line, which Bartholomae, Reichelt, Nyberg, Duchesne-Guillemin, Gaál, Tavadia and Humbach have taken to be a dative.⁵ The first hemistich of the Ahunavaiti lines (*Y.* 28-34) consists almost without exception of seven syllables. Eight syllables occur in 34.8a (perhaps also in 30.3b, where however, *ca* may have been secondarily inserted, and 32.1b, where *manōi* may be = *mnōi*) but there is little evidence for hemistichs of six syllables: in 34.4c *aṭ* may stand for disyllabic [*aat*], see Oldenberg, *Noten* ad *RS.* I. 6.4; as for 28.5 and 33.2c see below; for 32.11b the reading *aṇhavasā* (Humbach) is hardly correct.

It would be tempting, therefore, to assume a disyllabic ending *-āi* in *ahurāi*,⁶ the more so as the accent of Greek *Ἀήρ* and the intonation of Lithuanian *paskui*, *vilkui* point to a prehistoric contraction **-o + ei > *-ōi*.⁷ In the Vedic language, however, there are, out of a total number of 157 occurrences of *asmai* (*ásmai*, *asmaí*, *asmai-asmai*) only four (according to Oldenberg)⁸ where the ending may possibly be scanned as a disyllable. The very few instances of *asmai* which Oldenberg considers certain (only III. 13.1 and VIII. 31.2) form a remarkable contrast with the 150 odd passages where the ending is monosyllabic. Besides, no parallel case of *-ai* is stated to occur among the 84 Rigvedic occurrences of *tásmāi* (56), *yásmāi* (22), *kásmāi* (5) and *amúṣmāi* (1). In the Gathic dialect *ahmāi*, *yahmāi* and *kahmāi* have a monosyllabic termination *-ai* (cf., e.g., 44.16e).⁹ Also the nominal dative in *-ai* or *-āi* *ā* seems to be generally considered as

⁵ Cf. Bartholomae, *Altiran. Wörterb.*, col. 1161 (= "des Ah."), Reichelt, *Awestisches Elementarbuch*, pp. 244, 498, *Avesta Reader*, p. 189, Nyberg, *Irans forntida Religioner*, p. 180 f. (accepted by Duchesne-Guillemin, *Zoroastre*, p. 238, [against *JAs*, 1936, I, p. 246], and by Gaál, *Acta Orientalia Acad. scient. hungar.*, II [1952], p. 177), Tavadia, *Indo-Iranian Studies*, II (1952), p. 88, Humbach, *IF*, 62, p. 305, *Die Gathas*, II (1959), p. 19.

⁶ Thus Andreas, *Gött. Nachr.*, 1909, p. 44, Humbach, *Die Gathas des Zarathustra*, II (1959), p. 19. Similarly Taraporewala, *BDCRI*, X (1950), p. 43, who assumed *ahurāi*.

⁷ See Wackernagel, *Altindische Grammatik*, I, p. 51f.

⁸ See *Die Hymnen des R̥gveda*, Bd. I, *Metrische und textgeschichtliche Prolegomena* (1888), p. 188; but see his *R̥gveda, Textkritische und exegetische Noten*, ad V. 33. 1, VIII. 2.41; 62.1; 103.6.

⁹ The same is true of *ahmāi* in the later dialect, see Geldner, *Über die Metrik des jüngeren Avesta* (1877), p. 9. The argument is based on the assumption that the element added to **to-* is **-smo-*, cf. *tāt* : *tásmāt*. Hence *tásmāi* stands for PIE. **tósmaī* (< **to-smo-ei*), just as *vīrdy-a* stands for PIE. **wīrdī*.

containing a monosyllabic diphthong. At least, I am not aware that it has ever been quoted among the instances of disyllabic long vowels, nor has Vedic *-āya* ever *ā*. In the case of Gathic *āi*, it is true, there are among the 58 instances (if correctly counted)¹⁰ a few passages where the metre invites a disyllabic scanning of *-āi*, viz. 33.2c *tōi vārāi rādantī* and 51.11a *kā urvaθō spitamāi*. Reading *vārāi ā* (against 51.6a *yascā hōi vārāi rāda!*) in the first passage, and *kā vā* in the second (in accordance with b and c)¹¹ is a gratuitous procedure as it remains unexplained, then, how the original readings could have become corrupted. The same coincidence of a dative in *-āi* and a hemistich which lacks one syllable occurs in 28.5b *gātūmcā ahurāi*, which is to be discussed below. On the other hand, no argument can be derived from 31.15b *duš.šyaoθanāi*, which should be read [*duššiyauθnāi*]¹² or [*duššyauθ.nāi*]¹³ rather than [*duššyauθnāi*]¹⁴,

In view of these three passages the possibility that a very antique pronunciation of the dative ending as disyllabic [*-aai*] has left some traces in Zarathustra's prosody cannot definitely be ruled out, although the isolated character of these three forms, when considered in the light of the entire Avestan and Vedic evidence, raises strong doubts. Humbach assumes *-āi* in two passages and in 31.15b, but refrains from doing so in 28.5b *gātūmcā ahurāi*.

However, although the prosody affords no decisive argument against taking 30.1b (*staotācā*) *ahurāi* as a dative, there remains the syntactical argument that such parallel passages in Younger Avestan as *Visp.* 9.6 *staotaca ... yaṭ aēša ahurahe mazdā* point to the conclusion that *ahurāi* in 30.1b also has a genitive function. In this respect Bartholomae's explanation of this form as a "dativus pro genitivo", though plainly unacceptable in itself, was indeed based on a correct idea. This syntactical conclusion is supported by the fact that in Younger Avestan genitive forms ending in *-āi* (for *-ahe*) are not rare. In *janta ažōiš dahākāi* (*Yt.* 19.92, *V.* 1.17), for instance, or in *daθušō ahurāi mazdāi* (*Yt.* 13.157, 15.44, *V.* 19.4) the syntacti-

¹⁰ For the Gathic dative forms in *-āi* see Karl Lichterbeck, *KZ*, 33 (1893), p. 196. Not included are *ahurāi* and *ašāi* because in some passages they cannot be dative forms, and 27.14 *vahištāi*, 43.9e *manyāi*, 54.1 *rafədrāi* (but 28.3c, 33.13a and 46.12e have been included). The only instance of disyllabic *-āi* in the dative that is mentioned by Bartholomae, *Die Gāthā's und heiligen Gebete des altiranischen Volkes* (1879), p. 7, is *mazdāi*, but this stands for **mazdaHai* (see *IJJ*, I [1957], p. 92).

¹¹ Bartholomae, *Die Gāthā's* (1879), pp. 16,35 and 17,61, followed by Maria Wilkins Smith, *Studies in the Syntax of the Gathas of Zarathushtra* (1929), pp. 88, 152.

¹² See *IJJ*, IV (1960), p. 246.

¹³ Bartholomae, *Arische Forschungen*, III (1887), p. 14.

¹⁴ Andreas-Wackernagel, *Gött. Nachr.*, 1911, p. 25, Humbach, *Die Gathas des Zarathustra*, II, p. 29.

cal function of *dahākāi* and *ahurāi* cannot reasonably be doubted. Similarly Yt. 10.89 *zaota ahurāi mazdāi*, *zaota aməšanəm spəntanəm* must obviously be read [*zautā ahurahya mazdāh*]. In these passages the purely graphic origin of the spelling *-āi* for *-ahe*, due to a confusion of aleph and cheth in the Sassanian script, has long been recognized.¹⁵ The same graphical explanation eliminates (as Lommel has been the first to perceive) the syntactical difficulty of having to take *ahurāi* in 30.1b as a dative.

The assumption of a genitive form in *-āi* for *[-ahya]* in the Gathas is supported by a parallel instance that has been pointed out in 32.6c

θwahmī vā mazdā xšaθrōi ašāicā sēnghō vīdqm.

Humbach here assumes 7 + 8 syllables by reading *vīdqm* "soll ausgebreitet werden". Bartholomae's analysis as *vi-d(ā)-ām* – which Humbach accepts – was, however, based on the idea that imperative forms in *-ām* (instead of *-tām*) could be derived from any verbal root. Despite Gathic *-ūcqm* in 48.9c (as against 48.7a *-dyātqm*),¹⁶ both the Vedic evidence¹⁷ and the general rule that *-ām* occurs with verbs that have *r* in the 3rd pers. plur.¹⁸ plead in favour of Thieme's proposal¹⁹ to take *vīdqm* as identical with Vedic *vidām* (AthS. V. 30.13), which belongs to *vid-* "to find". In that case, however, *vīdqm* cannot be trisyllabic and since second hemistichs of less than eight syllables are unknown in the Gatha Ahunavaiti, *ašāicā* must necessarily be read as [*rtahya ca*].²⁰

More doubtful is 28.5b

gātūmcā ahurāi səvištāi səraošəm mazdāi,

where Humbach proposes to scan *gātūmcā*, which would yield 7 + 8 syllables. However, not only is a disyllabic *ā* unlikely in **gaHtu-* and has the Veda no instance of a trisyllabic **gātu-*, but since *-cā* connects *gātūm* with the preceding word *vaēdəmnō*, it is also impossible to ignore such Vedic

¹⁵ See Lommel, *Festschrift Andreas* (1916), p. 104, B. Geiger, *Die Aməša Spəntas* (1916), p. 68, Meillet, *JAs*, 1920, I, p. 198.

¹⁶ See Bartholomae, *Grundriss. Iran. Philologie*, I, p. 64, Reichelt, *Awest. Elementarbuch*, pp. 129, 139. It should be noted that Vedic *-(t)ām* is monosyllabic (for *āstām* X. 85.11 see Oldenberg, *Noten*, a.l.), so that a trisyllabic *vīdqm* would necessarily have to be taken as **vi-dā-ām*, an innovation for proto-Indo-Iranian **vi-dhH-ām*.

¹⁷ Macdonell, *Vedic Grammar*, p. 339.

¹⁸ See Wackernagel, *Kleine Schriften*, p. 311.

¹⁹ Thieme apud Altheim, *Paideuma*, III, 6-7 (1949), p. 273.

²⁰ Lommel, *Wörter und Sachen*, 19 (1938), p. 241 ("wahrscheinlich zu Unrecht", Schlerath, *OLZ*, 57 [1962], col. 575). Altheim suggested to read **ašāyacā*. Bartholomae's radical emendations (*Die Gāthā's*, 1879, p. 33), accepted by M. Wilkins Smith, *Studies in the Syntax of the Gathas* (1929), p. 84, were based on an incorrect analysis of *ašāicā*.

parallels as I. 96.4b *vidād gātūm tānayāya svarvīt*, X. 104.8d *devébhyo gātūm mānuṣe ca vindah*.²¹ Accordingly, this points to a dative *ahurāi*. For metrical reasons it would admittedly be tempting to read (following Lommel) [*gātūm ca ahurahya savištahya srauṣam mazdā'ah*], but the assumption of a genitive, already suggested by Westergaard²², necessitates the same emendation of the last word as in the YAv. passages quoted above. The decision must depend on the value one attaches to the metrical argument and on one's general ideas about the reliability of the text handed down in the manuscripts.

Another emendation proposed for a metrically abnormal line of 7+10 syllables, though admittedly hazardous, still deserves to be mentioned here. Y. 32.9c

tā uxōā mainyēuš mahyā mazdā ašāicā yūšmaibyā gərəzē

would become a prosodically normal line if *mazdā* would be deleted as an interpolation, and *ašāi* would be taken as **ašahyā* [*rtahya*]. From a purely formal point of view it may be observed that in *mazdā ašəmčā* 28.9a, which also occurs after the caesura, the first word is also likely to be an interpolation, the alternative being the assumption of synaloephe in *mazdāšāicā*, which is a notoriously rare sandhi phenomenon in the Gathas.²³

²¹ Cf. Humbach, *IF*, 63 (1957), p. 102, n. 4; see also H. P. Schmidt, *III*, I (1957), p. 167 ff.

²² Westergaard, *Zendavesta*, I (1852-54), p. 54: "perhaps the genitive case is to be substituted for the dative"; Bartholomae, *Arische Forschungen*, II (1886), p. 140 f. A. V. Williams Jackson, *A Hymn of Zoroaster* (1888), p. 31, explained it as a "dative construed as a genitive". Schmidt (see n. 21) disregards the prosodical difficulties.

²³ For 32.9c see Meillet, *JAs*, 1920, I, p. 198. The remarkable absence of vowel contraction in sandhi in the Gathas is not due to the secondary restoration of the pausa variants (for which see Humbach, *Die Gathas*, I, p. 17), as is shown by the metre. The Gathic instances of synaloephe enumerated by Bartholomae, *Die Gāthā's*, 1879, p. 14 (cf. also *Ar. Forsch.*, III, [1887] p. 11), which all belong to the Gatha Ahunavaiti, have been discussed in a contribution to the *Unvala Memorial Volume*. Most important is 33.1a *yaθā āiš iθā varəšaitē* with (apparently) disyllabic *yaθā āiš* (*yaθāiš* K₂₀ J₆ S₂, cf. Humbach, *op. cit.*, I, p. 25 n. 27). But in view of the variant reading the possibility of an incorrect analysis of the older text (with scriptio continua) should be considered: cf., e.g., *yā āim* for *yā im* 44.19e, or *ava. antarə* V. 9.11 for *avantarə* (Geldner, *Avesta, Die heiligen Bücher der Parsen, Prolegomena*, p. XLVIIIb). If so, *yaθāiš* could possibly stand for **yaθā āiš*, cf. *Zaraθ-uštra-* for **Zaraθ-uštra-* and *pairi.ciθiṭ*, *aipi. ciθiṭ* 29.4ab (if standing for **ciṭ-iṭ*). It should be noted that for 29.1c *aθā mōi sastā vohū vāstryā* Bartholomae, *Die Gāthā's* (1879), pp. 15, 22, and M. Wilkins Smith, *Studies in the Syntax of the Gathas*, p. 66, read **aθ mōi* ... (otherwise Bartholomae, *Arische Forschungen*, III [1887], p. 11, Andreas-Wackernagel, *Gött. Nachr.*, 1931, p. 330), and that Lommel, *Gött. Nachr.*, 1934, p. 71, suggested to read *aθā* for 43.9d *aθ aθ* (v.l. *aθā*). For the graphical implications of such "emendations" see Thieme *apud* Altheim, *Weltgeschichte*

While the last two cases are admittedly doubtful, *ašāicā* in 32.6c would seem a fairly certain instance of the spelling *-āi* for *-ahya* in the Gathas, which is parallel to those occurring in the Younger Avesta. For those scholars who hold Andreas's theory to be no longer tenable, it may be useful to stress the fact that, while Lommel's and Meillet's graphical interpretations of the Gathic passages just mentioned are based on that theory, the procedure of explaining final *-āi* as a misreading for *HY* [= *ahya*] in the older script is much older than Andreas's theory. The mere comparison of *Yt.* 5.4; 8.31 *zrayā* (v.l. *zrayāi*) *vouru.kašaya* with *Yt.* 5.3; 8.30 *aoi* (*avi*) *zrayō* *vouru.kašəm* is sufficient to show that *zrayā(i)* must be a locative, parallel to *vouru.kašay-a*, and consequently stands for [*zrayahi*]. As far back as 1889 Bartholomae, *ZDMG*, 43, p. 668 n. 3, pointed out that *zrayāi* owes its origin to a misreading of an older manuscript (with *ā* standing for *h*) and a few years later he and Mills drew attention to the additional evidence of the ending of the 2nd pers. sing. in *-āi* for [*-ahi*].²⁴ In the *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, col. 1702, Bartholomae still maintains this graphic explanation, which Reichelt, *Awestisches Elementarbuch*, p. 34, omits to mention. That Bartholomae's explanation of these YAv. readings agrees in principle with Lommel's and Meillet's is not surprising, as the conviction that our Avesta text is a transcription of an older text, written in some sort of Pahlavi script, can be traced back to the middle of the 19th century.²⁵ The same interpretation, based on the identity of the characters for *aleph* and *h* in the Pahlavi script, was also proposed for Aog. 28 *aṇrāi* = [*ahrahya*] by Duchesne-Guillemin, *JAs*, 1936 I, p. 246.

2. These readings, which unequivocally prove "the defective nature of the archetype of all the manuscripts" (as Meillet put it),²⁶ point to the conclusion that at the time when the older text (written in Pahlavi characters) was transcribed in the newly created Avestan script, the exact form and the meaning of the text was, in some Gathic passages at least, no longer precisely known. This means that the authentic text of the prophet's own words had not been *entirely* preserved by an uninterrupted

Asiens im griechischen Zeitalter, I, p. 91 n. 75. Most modern translators, however, assume a correlation between *yaθā* and *iθā* in 33.1a. As for 28.9a, both Andreas-Wackernagel and Lentz, *Yasna* 28, pp. 31, 73 f., are inclined to delete *mazdā*.

²⁴ Bartholomae, *ZDMG*, 48 (1894), p. 149, and Mills, *ibid.*, 49 (1895), p. 483.

²⁵ See references in *IJJ*, V (1961), p. 40 n. 4 and cf., e.g., Roth, *Yaçna* 31 (1876), p. 17, Bartholomae, *Die Gāthā's* (1879), p. 2. Lommel's explanation of *zrayāi* was accepted by L. H. Gray, *JAOS*, 61 (1941), p. 104 n. 26.

²⁶ *JAs*, 1920, I, p. 195, *MSL*, 21, p. 189.

oral tradition, and that, in some doubtful passages at least, the only thing the transcribers could do was to transcribe as accurately as possible the word forms they found in the older manuscript. In these cases there was *only a graphical transmission of the sacred text*,²⁷ with occasional confusion of the *aleph* and the character for *h*. Furthermore, such inconsistencies in the orthography of the Gathas as *ainīm* 53.5d versus *anyām* 34.7c, 46.7c, or *aēm* 29.8a versus *ayām* 44.12e²⁸ suggest a similar conclusion.

It has long been noted that the orthography of the Vulgate text, where all final vowels in the Gathas are written as long ones, merely reflects the protracted priestly recitation of later times and, therefore, cannot have been a characteristic of the original text;²⁹ nor can it be connected with similar peculiarities of the Old Persian orthography. The secondary character of this protraction of final vowels is particularly clear in *Zarathuštrahē* 53.1a, 3b, the only Gathic instance of a genitive form in *-ahe* for *-ahyā*, where the final vowel *-e* must be due to a misinterpretation of the grapheme (*H*)*Y* and, therefore, must date from a relatively late period. It follows that the Gathic spelling *ašāi*, which occurs beside *ašahyā*, should not be explained as a case of "defective" spelling in the Pahlavi script of the older text,³⁰ since it is more true that it preserves the original form with a short final vowel.

These remarks may serve as an introduction to a discussion of the text of *Y.* 30.1c *humqzdrā ašā yecā yā raocābiš darəsatā urvāzā*, to which I shall here confine myself.

That the meaning of this line was no longer known to the author of the *Dēnkart*, who held it to refer to the *urvāxm i amahraspandān* "the bliss of the Aməša Spəntas", appears from Schaefer's discussion of this passage in his *Iranische Beiträge*, I, p. 90. Bartholomae suggested that *yecā* here stands (quite irregularly!) for *yācā*,³¹ but his various attempts to translate

²⁷ See, e.g., Hoffmann's well-balanced judgement in *Iranistik*, I, p. 9 f. There is, accordingly, a core of truth in Andreas' theory, despite Schaefer's denial in *ZDMG*, 95 (1941), p. 298. The existence of a *written* text of the Avesta during the reign of the last Arsacid is now an established fact. Against Horn's assumption of a phonetic development *-ahya* > *-ahe* > *-āi* (*BB*, 17, p. 152 f.) see Bartholomae, *Grundr. iran. Phil.*, I, p. 232.

²⁸ Cf., e.g. Bartholomae, *Die Gāthā's und heiligen Gebete* (1879), p. 10 f., *Morgensterne*, *NTS*, 12 (1942), p. 32 n. 6, Humbach, *Die Gathas*, I, p. 23.

²⁹ Cf. Haug, *Essays on the sacred Language, Writings, and Religion of the Parsis* (2nd ed., 1878, 3rd ed., 1884), p. 73, Bartholomae, *Die Gāthā's* (1879), p. 68, Reichelt, *Awest. Elementarb.* (1909), p. 34, Meillet, *JAs*, 1920, I, p. 198, Schaefer, *Iran. Beiträge*, (1930), p. 261 n. 5.

³⁰ Lommel, *Wörter und Sachen*, 19 (1938), p. 241.

³¹ Thus also Neriosengh: *sumatā puṇyena yaś ca, yaś cāntar rociši ālokanena ānanditah*. Andreas follows Bartholomae in taking *ašā yecā* as standing for *ašā *yācā* (*Gött. Nachr.*,

these words into Latin only show (what is obvious at first sight) that a construction with two relatives, one of which follows immediately after the other, is impossible. Indeed, “*ea praedicabo ... quae (sunt) recordanda ... a bene recordante una cum Aša quaeque, quae una cum luce videatur voluptas*” is not intelligible in Latin either, for *quae* is here redundant, and *quaeque voluptas quae* can hardly be paraphrased as *et voluptatem* (as Bartholomae does).³² The difference between the construction here imputed to Zarathustra and, e.g., Plaut. *Amph.* 779 *tu qui quae facta infiteare*,³³ the meaning of which is clear at a glance, is obvious.

Apart from these syntactical objections there is the difficulty that *yā* is never written as *ye*, except before *m* and *n*.³⁴ On the other hand, there are in the Gathas eleven occurrences of *yācā* without any variant reading;

1909, p. 44). Only in the *Altiran. Wörterb.*, col. 1217 is it written +*ye* (NSf.) *čā*. Spiegel, *Commentar über das Avesta*, II, p. 220, left it untranslated.

³² *Altiran. Wörterb.*, col. 566. Cf. col. 1834: “*quae-que laetitia*”, “und von der Wonne, die von dem, der es [nāml. *mazdāθā*] sich gut merkt, (zugleich) mit dem *Aša*, die (zugleich) mit dem Lichtraum erschaut werden kann” (thus also in *Die Gatha's des Avesta*, 1905, p. 13); col. 1217: “*et (voluptatem) quae una cum Ašo quae una cum luce videatur voluptas*”. Much clearer is at any rate Andreas' translation (*Gött. Nachr.*, 1909, p. 48): “die Lobpreisungen und Gebete) die sich der Wissende insgesamt merken muss, sowie die mit dem sehr weisen Recht verbundenen Freuden, die mit ihrem Licht herrlich anzuschauen sind”. In the essential points nearly all modern translators agree with Bartholomae and Andreas, e.g., Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism* (1926), p. 172, Christensen, *Avesta, Zarathushtrienes heilige Skrifter i Udtog* (1923), p. 4, Schaeder, *ZDMG*, 94 (1940), p. 403, Barr, *Avesta* (1954), p. 91, Gaál, *Acta Orientalia acad. scient. hungar.*, II (1952), p. 178, who renders “*quaeque quae splendoribus conspicitur laetitia (= quaeque beatitudo sit, quae una cum sapientissima Veritate in splendoribus caelestibus conspicitur)*”, “und was für eine Freude (= himmlische Seligkeit) die ist, die, im Verein mit der sehr weisen Wahrheit, durch das (himmlische) Licht (oder: in der himmlischen Herrlichkeit) sichtbar wird”. Duchesne-Guillemin, *Zoroastre* (1948), pp. 238, 296a has: “Et la joie que verra, par la justice, dans la lumière celui qui les aura bien retenues”. Only Humbach, *Die Gathas*, I, p. 84, gives an entirely different rendering: “Ihr Wohllachtsamen! In Wahrhaftigkeit nähere ich mich mit der Erhebung, die durch die Lichter sichtbar ist”, the meaning of which he characterizes as “recht unklar” (vol. II, p. 19). Earlier translations like those by Haug, *Essays on the sacred Language* (etc.), 2nd ed. (1878), 3rd ed. (1884), p. 149, Geldner, *Studien zum Avesta* (1882), p. 47, KZ, 27, p. 286, 28, p. 409, Hübschmann, *Ein zoroastrisches Lied* (1872), p. 13, Wilhelm, *ZDMG*, 42 (1888), p. 82, Bartholomae, *Arische Forschungen*, II (1886), p. 117, may be passed by in silence.

³³ Discussed by Benveniste, *BSL*, 53 (1958), p. 52.

³⁴ Gathic *ayeni* 34.6c, 46.1a, 50.9a, YAv. *aēni* V. 3.27, *uzayeni* Yt. 15.32, V. 22.1, etc. Cf. *Grundr. iran. Phil.*, I (1895), p. 174 (§298,5), where, beside *zbayemi*, *ayeni* and *hācayene*, as an isolated instance of *e* before *c* is mentioned *yecā* “ich will bitten”. This must refer to Y. 51.2a, see *Arische Forschungen*, II (1886), p. 118 (in *Die Gāthā's*, 1879, p. 75, *yecā* in 30.1c is taken as **yēcā*). As for *āyesē* 53.6c, this does not stand for **āyāsē* (Bartholomae, *Die Gāthā's*, 1879, p. 75, *Altiran. Wörterb.*, col. 1289, W. P. Schmidt, *IF*, 62, p. 235), but is equivalent to Skt. *āyacche*; see the references in *IJ*, IV, p. 259 n. 66.

cf. 29.4b, 33.1c, 14c, 34.1a, 43.5c, 44.8cd, 20d, 48.10d, 50.10ab. For this reason alone *yecā* cannot mean "and which", nor "I approach, I come".³⁵

The correct interpretation of *ašā yecā* emerges from *ašāicā* 32.6c beside *ašahyācā* 30.10c, 31.21b, as in the above discussion (p. 99). Since the character for *h* in the older script was occasionally misread as an *aleph* and incorrectly transcribed in the archetype which was written in the new Avestan script, we may expect to find in the Gatha text *-āya/-āi* beside *-ahyā/-ahē*. At the time when the final vowels came to be written as long ones the reading **ašāya ca* was no longer recognized as a genitive. Owing to the tendency of the scribes to split up word forms in such a way that they obtained pronominal forms³⁶ **ašāyaca* was written as **ašā yaca* and in the last "word", which regularly became *yecā* in the orthography of the later manuscripts, the short final vowel of *-ahya* was preserved, just as it had been in *ašāicā* versus *ašahyācā*. (It must be admitted, though, that in *varəzanā hēcā* 46.1c, which has been taken to stand for *varəzanah-yaca*, the *ē* cannot be explained). The variant readings of the manuscripts show the normal divergencies that may be expected *a priori*: beside *ašā yecā* (thus also *Mf.*!) there occur the readings *ašā yācā* L₂₀, *ašāyācā* J₆, *ašāi yecā* J₁, *ašā yaēcā* S₃.³⁷ Since the corrupt readings *ašā yecā* and *ašāicā* must date back to the time when the old text was transcribed in the new script and since they point to the conclusion that their real meaning was no longer known at that time, the variant readings must apparently be traced back to the archetype in Avestan script. They raise no doubt some problems of their own, but they do not teach us anything about the original form of the word, which Zarathustra must have pronounced as [*rtahya*]. Cf. 53.6d, 9b and YAv. *anarəta-*, *Astvař.ərəta-* (etc.).

As a result the following translation may be suggested for the whole strophe: "Now I will tell those things, O you who are coming (?) to me,"³⁸

³⁵ Humbach, *Die Gathas*, I, pp. 84, 150 (like Bartholomae, see the preceding note, but with a different meaning, based upon an analysis of *yēc-* which I cannot accept, see *III*, IV, p. 259).

³⁶ E.g., *mazdā.θwā* for *mazdāθwā* 30.1a, *ā.varə.nā* for *āvarənā* 30.2b, *x^oāθrō.yā* for *x^oāθrōyā* 43.2b, *yā hi* for *yāhi* 46.14c, 49.9d, *mōi.tū* for [*mā it tu*] Yt. 10.69, *varəzi nā* for [*vrzanyā*] 45.9a (see *Oriental Studies Pavry*, p. 283f.), *θwōi ahi* 34.11c, if for [*θwayahi*], see Humbach, *Die Gathas*, I, p. 17.

³⁷ Some emendations of *ašā yecā* have been proposed by earlier scholars. Geldner, *Studien zum Avesta* (1882), p. 47 n.2, accepted Roth's suggestion to read *asay(a)ēcā* (dative of *aši-*) as an "elegante Conjekture". Bartholomae's objection "wozu aber nicht der geringste anlass vorliegt" (*Arische Forschungen*, II, p. 18) is curious in view of the serious difficulties of this text. Taraporewala, *BDCRI*, X (1950), p. 44 read *ašāicā*, with a disyllabic termination of the dative, which is hardly correct (see above, p. 97f.).

³⁸ Taken as a vocative by Haug, *Die fünf Gāthā's*, I, p. 95, Hübschmann, *Ein zoroastrisches Lied*, p. 12, Bartholomae, *Arische Forschungen*, II, p. 117, Gaál, *Acta Orienta-*

which should be noted whatsoever (?) by the initiate, the hymns to Ahura and the prayers to Vohu Manah, O very wise men,³⁹ and the bliss of Aša which manifests itself⁴⁰ together with the lights".⁴¹

3. That *urvāzā* in Y. 30.1c demands a genitive appears from Y. 36.2 *urvāzištaḥyā urvāzyā* "and with the bliss of the most blissful" and indirectly from Y. 32.1b (*ahyācā...*) *ahurahyā urvāzēmā mazdā* "and for the bliss of this Ahura Mazdā [shall the nobility beg]".

This bliss, which Ahura Mazdā grants the soul during or after life-time (*urvāsma ... vahištəm ahūm* P. 38) can hardly have been different from "the most blissful union with Aša".⁴² Both notions are indeed closely related. Thus the intoxication caused by Haoma is said to be attended by Aša and bliss (or, as it is mostly translated, "by blissful Aša").⁴³

Aša, who is the friend (32.2b) and "prudent counsellor" (46.17e) of Ahura Mazdā, and who perhaps is said to dwell in his abode (30.10bc),

lia acad. scient. hung., II (1952), pp. 175, 178, Tavadia, *Indo-Iranian Studies*, II (1952), p. 88, Humbach, *WZKSO*, I, p. 84 n. 13. Lommel gave the translation "herbeistreibt" as an alternative in *Gött. Nachr.*, 1934, p. 96 (thus also Humbach, *MüSS.*, 7, p. 77).

³⁹ Cf. *mazdra-* (Andreas, *Gött. Nachr.*, 1909, p. 44, Duchesne-Guillemin, *Les composés de l'Avesta*, 1936, pp. 101, 131, Gaál, *Acta Orient.*, II [1952], p. 177, Wackernagel, *Altind. Gramm.*, I, *Nachträge*, ad p. 82,35 f., Humbach, *MüSS.*, 9, p. 77, *WZKSO*, I, p. 83 n. 9). However, there is no direct connexion with Ved. *médhira-* which stands for **m̥s-dhH-ro-* and takes the place of **medhā-* (cf. also Wackernagel-Debrunner, *Altind. Gramm.*, III, p. 362). The form *humqzdrā* has sometimes been construed with *ašā* (Andreas, Gaál, *Acta Or.*, II, p. 178: "sapientissima Veritate", "im Verein mit der sehr weisen Wahrheit"), which is implausible from a semantic point of view and, besides, excluded if *ašā yecā* stands for a genitive. So *humqzdrā* most likely refers to the persons addressed by the prophet. Since an instrumental case cannot easily be construed with *darasatā*, the only possibility that remains is to take it as a vocative (Bartholomae, *Arische Forschungen*, II, p. 118, Humbach, *Die Gathas*, I, p. 84).

⁴⁰ *darasatā*: Ved. *darśatā-* is the typical word for the epiphany of Varuṇa, Mitra, Uṣas, Agni, and the sun, and is further used in connexion with *vāpuṣ-*, all of which belong to the mystery of the nether world (see below). *d.* should not be taken, therefore, as a verbal form.

⁴¹ No attempt will be made here to explain 51.2ab *tā vē mazdā paourvīm ahurā ašāi yecā* / *taibyācā ārmaitē dōišā mōi ištōiš xšaθrəm*, although a genitive *ašahyacā* would be possible if *taibyā xšaθrəm* is a stylistic peculiarity of the Gathas for *tavā xšaθrəm* 53.9d, *θwā xšaθrā* 43.14c. It is taken in this sense by, e.g., Geiger, *Die Amāša Spēntas*, p. 207. Since *ašāi yecā* and *taibyācā* seem in any case to be parallel, the alternative would be to take *ašāi yecā* as a dative. However, the datives in *-āi ā* (see Bartholomae, *Arische Forsch.*, III, p. 63) mostly stand before pause or caesura (except for *magāi ā* 29.11b, *x^aarəθāi ā* 34.11a) and seem never to have been followed by *ca*. For 33.14bc *dadāiti paourvatātəm manajhascā vañhəuš mazdāi* / *šyaəbanahyā ašā(i) yācā uxəəhyācā sərəəšəm xšaθrəmcā* see the recent interpretation by H. P. Schmidt, *IJJ*, I (1957) p. 171 n. 38, Humbach, *Die Gathas*, I, p. 104.

⁴² 49.8ab *urvāzištəm ašahyā dā sarēm*. Cf. Yt. 11.4 *aša.sar-*.

⁴³ Y. 10.8 *hō yō haomahe maðō ašā hacaite urvāsmana*.

is also closely associated with the latter's "dominion" (*xšaθra-*). The last line of 32.6⁴⁴ must either be translated as "in thy dominion, O Wise, and in Aša's shall your (plur.) praise (or, commandment) be proclaimed (or, found)", or else as "in thy dominion, O Wise, shall your (plur.) and Aša's praise be proclaimed (or, found)". In both cases the implication is clear. Thus in 49.8 the prophet prays that Ahura Mazdā may "grant the most blissful union with Aša" to Fərašaoštra and himself: "in thy dominion, for all time, let us be (thy) beloved ones".⁴⁵

As B. Geiger has shown,⁴⁶ this association of the word *xšaθra-* with God and Aša is one of the traces of Old Aryan cosmological ideas surviving in Zarathustra's theology. In the *Rigveda* Mitra and Varuṇa are *kṣatriyā* (dual), the lords of Rta and light, and the "luminous dominion" is theirs.⁴⁷ The question as to where this domain was situated will, therefore, have to be studied more closely.

Varuṇa is the god of the primeval waters which belong to the pre-Indric world of Chaos. He is an Asura, and just as the Asuras are called the elder brothers of the celestial gods (*devās*),⁴⁸ and just as Varuṇa's and Mitra's reign (*asuryā-*) is said to be "the oldest",⁴⁹ so mention is sometimes made of the "first gods".⁵⁰ Hence, when Varuṇa is said to have "measured the first creation" or "the first place"⁵¹ this is likely to refer to the pre-Indric world governed by Varuṇa and the Asuras.

After the primordial hill has arisen from the waters, these are thought

⁴⁴ 32.6c *θwahmī vā mazdā xšaθrōi ašāicā sānghō vīdqm*.

⁴⁵ 49.8cd *vanhāu θwahmī ā xšaθrōi | yavōi vispāi fraēštānhō ānhāmā*.

⁴⁶ *Die Amaša Spāntas*, pp. 204, 232, esp. p. 207.

⁴⁷ *kṣatriyā* VII. 64.2, VIII. 25.8; *ṛtasya jyōtiṣas pāti* I. 23.5; *jyōtiṣmat kṣatram* I. 136.3.

⁴⁸ RS. X. 124.4, 151.3 (with Geldner's notes on his translation), AS. VI. 100.3 (P. von Bradke, *Dyaus Asura*, p. 89), MS. IV. 2.1, ŚB. I.2.4.8, XIV.4.1.1 (BĀU. I.3.1), TB. II.3.8.1 f., II.2.9.5 and, e.g., Bergaigne, *La Religion védique*, III, p. 1 ff., Hillebrandt, *Ved. Mythologie*, II³, p. 427 n.2, Neisser, *Zum Wörterb. des Rigveda*, I, p. 142 f., J. J. Meyer, *Trilogie der Vegetationsmächte*, II, pp. 3, 257, III, p. 211 (but also Index, p. 288!). As for KS. XXVII. 9 (p. 148, 17 f.) *te 'surā bhūyārṇsaś śreyārṇsa āsan, kanī-yārṇsaḥ pāpīyārṇsa ānujāvaratarā iva devās ...* the reading with *ānu-* is of course quite correct (against my suggestion, III, IV, p. 219). The different age of the older and the younger gods, which has often wrongly been explained from a supposed change in the cult, was still known to the authors of the *Mahābhārata*, cf. XII. 34.13 (crit.ed.) *asurā bhrātaro jyeṣṭhā devās cāpi yaviyasaḥ*. See *Indological Studies in honor of W. Norman Brown* (1962), p. 145 n. 51.

⁴⁹ VII.65.1c *yāyor asuryām ākṣitam jyeṣṭham*, cf. IV.42.2b *ahām rājā vāruṇo māhyam tāny asuryāni prathamā dhārayanta*, and see Geiger, *Die Amaša Spāntas*, p. 206 n.

⁵⁰ VII.21.7 *devās cit te asuryāya pūrvē 'nu kṣatrāya mamire sāhāmsi*, X.72.3 *devānām yugē prathamē*, AS. XI.8.10 *yé tā āsan dāsa jātā devā devēbhyaḥ purā*, Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 17.

⁵¹ VIII.41.10c *sā dhāma pūrvyām mame*, and 4c *sā mātā pūrvyām padām*. Cf. also Lüders, *Varuṇa*, p. 712 n. 11, and Renou, *Festgabe Lommel*, p. 125 on AS. III.13.2.

of as being covered by, and enclosed in this mountain. The earth is said not only to lie upon the waters⁵² but also to envelop the waters like a "receptacle".⁵³ By delivering the waters from this receptacle Indra inaugurates the "second creation". In other words, since the hill is the sacred image of (and, as such, identical with) the earth, the primeval waters are looked upon as a "hidden ocean" under the earth – a notion also found in Babylonian mythology.⁵⁴

Varuṇa, accordingly, is the god of the nether world. Here he resides and watches over the Cosmic Order (*Ṛtā*), which is said to be "fixed and hidden where they unharness the horses of the sun".⁵⁵ There can hardly be any doubt as to what is meant here. According to the *Atharva-Veda* Agni becomes Varuṇa in the evening, and the *Kauṣītaki-Brāhmaṇa* states that the sun, "having entered the waters, becomes Varuṇa".⁵⁶ So, while setting in the western ocean (where according to *ŚB.* X. 6.4.1 the night is born) the sun assumes the character of the god of the nether world, who in the classificatory system is always associated with the western quarter. Indeed, the words *ṛtasya yóniḥ* "womb of the *Ṛta*" are said to be equivalent to "water" (*Naighaṇṭuka* 1.12), while the parallelism between *parāvāt-* and the "seat of *Ṛta*" in IV. 21.3 suggests the inference that that "seat" was situated in the nether world. Thus the horses of the Sun can be said to come "from the seat of *Ṛta*" (see note 122), just as "the sun arises from the earth" (I. 157.1):

⁵² *AB.* III.6.4 *prthivy apsu* (scil. *pratiṣṭhitā*). See also note 125.

⁵³ *MS.* I.4.10 (p. 59,5) *yáryh apó ghrñiyád imāñ tārhi mánasā dhyāyed, iyám vā etasāñ pātram*. Similarly *KS.* XXXII.7 (p. 26, 14 f.).

⁵⁴ Cf., e.g., W. B. Kristensen, *Symbol en Werkelijkheid*, p. 286. For the Indian ideas see Hopkins, *Epic Mythology*, p. 26: "But it must be remembered that 'under earth' is water, a part of Varuṇa's domain", and Lüders, *Varuṇa*, pp. 315-322 "Der Samudra im Felsen" (but on p. 34 he wrongly states that "das unterirdische Totenwasser" is "ganz vergessen" in India); cf. also Renou-Silburn, *JAs*, 1949, p. 13 on the atmospheric water-basin "semblable aux flots de l'océan, cette tournoyante qui, semble-t-il, soutient les astres".

⁵⁵ *RS.* V.62.1 *ṛtēna ṛtām āpīhitañ dhruvāñ vāñ sūryasya yātra vimucānty āsvān*. I fail to understand how Geiger, *Die Amāṣa Spāntas*, p. 168 (cf. pp. 156 n., 176) can speak of "des in den Naturvorgängen wirkenden *Rta*, das am Himmel (*ṚV.* IV, 42, 4; V, 45, 7f.), dort, wo man die Sonnenrosse ablöst (V. 62,1) seinen Sitz hat", and how Lüders, *Varuṇa*, p. 318, can state that only the highest Heaven can be the resting-point of the sun, which he finds indicated in the words *svār yād āsman* (see also pp. 321, 328). For the use of *dhruvā-* with special reference to the nether world see n. 68.

⁵⁶ *AS.* XIII.3.13 *sā varuṇaḥ sāyām agnir bhavati*, *KauṣBr.* 18.9 *sa vā eṣo 'paḥ praviśya varuṇo bhavati*, perhaps also *RS.* II.38.8 *yādrādhyāñ varuṇo yōnim āpyam dñiṣitañ nīmīṣi jārbhurāṇaḥ*, VII.87.6ab *āva sindhuh varuṇo dyaūr iva sthād drapsó ná svetó mrgās tūviṣmān*. Thieme, *Mitra and Aryaman*, p. 71, and Renou, *Festgabe für Herman Lommel*, p. 125, hold *AS.* XIII.3.13 to be due to a secondary development. See my remark in *IJJ*, III, p. 210 and cf. K. Hoffmann, *OLZ*, 49 (1954), col. 394.

When Varuṇa, in his "fixed abodes", is said to support the sky "in the seat of Ṛta", this apparently refers to his abode under the earth. Elsewhere it is stated that he and Mitra hold both earth and heaven.⁵⁷ The fact that in later texts the same function is attributed to the Serpent Śeṣa⁵⁸ is particularly interesting because in the *Atharva-Veda* Varuṇa has authority over the serpent world (Shende, *BDCRI*, IX, p. 281). Like Śeṣa, Varuṇa must have been conceived as supporting earth and heaven "from below" by means of the cosmic axis; cf. "Who supported the cosmic moieties, heaven, by the axis as *Ajā*".⁵⁹ While in later times this axis was identified with Mount Meru,⁶⁰ the cosmic mountain of the *Rigveda* does not yet bear that name (presumably of foreign origin), as this text is less concerned with primitive geography and much more with mythical cosmology, in which the primordial hill, as the sacred image of the earth, is generally denoted as *giri-*, *pārvata-*, *ādri-*, etc. On the other hand, the axis is also commonly equated to the cosmic tree, which in the ancient mythological conception of the world arose from the primordial hill. Therefore, Varuṇa, since he supports earth and heaven by means of the central pillar of the Universe (*skambhā-*), may be supposed also to hold the roots of that cosmic tree (see below, p. 116).

Varuṇa's "lofty dwelling", his "house with a thousand doors"⁶¹ is also called a "stone house" (*harmyā-*). In the early morning the goddess Dawn, when arising from the nether world, is said to come "from the *harmyāni* in the East", just as Agni is born in this stone house before becoming the navel of the radiant firmament.⁶² The notion of darkness appears to be intimately associated with this "stone house". It was, indeed, the dwelling-place of the dead, just as Varuṇa was the god of death.⁶³ Hence also

⁵⁷ Cf. IV.42.4 *dhārāyaṇī dīvaṇī sādane ṛtāsya* (Lüders: "ich befestigte"), V.62.3 *adhārayatam prthivīm utā dyām mitra rājānā varuṇā*, VIII.41.4ab *yāḥ kakūbho nidhārayāḥ prthivyām ādhi darśatāḥ*, etc., and Y.44.4b *kasnā dārētā zṛṇcā adā nabāscā*, Yt. 13.29 *upa.dārayaṇ asmanam*. For the notion of the *ṛtāsya sādā-*, which Lüders, *Varuṇa*, p. 24 ff., identifies with the highest heaven, see also Buddruss, *Festgabe für Herman Lommel*, p. 30.

⁵⁸ *Mhbh.* V.101.2 (crit. ed.) *eṣa śeṣaḥ sthito nāgo yene 'yaṇ dhāryate sadā ... mahī*, VIII.69.48 (cf. VII. 69.48 Bomb.ed.) *adhastād dharāṇīṇ yo 'sau sadā dhārayate nrpa, sa śeṣaḥ pannagaśreṣṭhaḥ*.

⁵⁹ VIII.41.10bc *yā skambhēna vī rōdasi ajō nā dyām ādhārayat*.

⁶⁰ The earliest reference occurs in *TA*. I.7.1 and 3. See Kirfel, *Kosmographie*, p. 2.

⁶¹ VII.88.5 *brhāntam mānam, sahāsradvāraṇ gṛhām*.

⁶² VII.76.2 *praticy āgād ādhi harmyēbhyah*, X.46.3 *sā śēvrdho jātā ā harmyēṣu nābhīr yūvā bhavati rocanāsya*. See n. 114.

⁶³ Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie*, II², pp. 20, 22, 32, K. F. Johansson, *Über die altindische Göttin Dhiṣaṇā und Verwandtes* (1917), p. 128 ff., J. J. Meyer, *Trilogie der Vegetationsmächte*, III, pp. 204, 209, 265. Cf. also *KS*. XIII. 2 (p. 181, 7 f.) *mṛtyur vai varuṇo*, and *MS*. II.5.6 (p. 55, 7 f.), where *vāruṇah* is equated to *pāpmā* and *vāruṇīṇ*

Yama was supposed to dwell in it.⁶⁴ The same association with darkness is also found in the story of Indra bringing the bellicose Śuṣṇa "into the darkness, into the stone house"⁶⁵, and indirectly in the words "blinded in the stone house" which the *Rigveda* uses with reference to Kaṇva. As the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* tells us, Kaṇva, though warned, inadvertently sat down on a seat, which immediately became a stone and enveloped him. This stone, the text says, "was darkness, as it were".⁶⁶

What is said of Yama's abode must also be true of Varuṇa's, for the dead who follow the paths along which the blessed fathers have gone "will see both kings, Yama and the god Varuṇa, revelling in their particular ways".⁶⁷ Varuṇa's nether world is called a "stone house" because he dwells in the depth of the cosmic mountain. (Cf. *IIJ*, IV, p. 249, V, p. 46 f., and J. J. Meyer, *Trilogie der Vegetationsmächte*, p. 205 n. 2, p. 230 ff.). It is no mere coincidence, indeed, that an epithet of the mountain, viz. "whose dwelling is firmly fixed", is also applied to Mitra and Varuṇa, and that the Ādityas, while "having a well-founded abode" (in the earth), cause the sun to rise.⁶⁸

In this connexion mention must be made of an old epithet of the Ādityas that occurs in *RS*. II. 27.3: "Those Ādityas with many eyes, who are wide (*urū-*) and deep (*gabhirā-*) and undeceived, although they wish to

kṛṣṇān pētvam is explained as follows: *tāmo vai kṛṣṇān, mṛtyūś tāmo*, ... Caland's suggestion that the world of the dead originally was in the west should be noticed in this connexion.

⁶⁴ *RS*. X.114.10, *AS*. XVIII.4.55 (see below, n. 67 and n. 73).

⁶⁵ V.32.5d *yūyutsantaṁ tāmasi harmyē dhāh*, cf. *tamogām* in 4.

⁶⁶ VIII.5.23 *yuvān kānvāya nāsatyā 'piriptāya harmyē śāsavad ūtr daśasyathaḥ*. Cf. I.118.7 *yuvān kānvāyā 'piriptāya cākṣuḥ prāty adhataṁ suṣṭutīm jujūṣānā*, *JB*. III.73 (line 5) *sā* (scil. *āsandī*) *hainam tad eva śilā bhūtvā 'bhisaṁviveṣṭi*, III.74 (line 4) *tama ivāsit*. In view of *śilā* it should be noted that in the *Rigveda* *harmyā-* is equivalent to *āśman-* (Geldner, *Kommentar*, p. 114).

⁶⁷ X.14.7 *ubhā rājānā svadhāyā mādantā / yamām paśyāsi varuṇaṁ ca devām*. Cf. *svasti te Varuṇo rājā Yamaś ca samitiṁjayāḥ Mhbh*. III. 140, 13 crit. ed.

⁶⁸ V.72.5 *dhruvākṣemā* (Mitra and Varuṇa), cf. IV.13.3 (Ādityas), III.54.20 (the mountains). Varuṇa dwells in his *dhruvāsu kṣitiṣu* VII.88.7, Mitra and Varuṇa are sitting *dhruvé sādasy uttamé sahasrasthūne* II.41.5 (cf. VIII.41.9d *varuṇasya dhruvān sādah*), which cannot be different from the *sahasradvāraṁ ... gṛhām* VII.88.5 (see also p.119); *uttamā-* refers to the night aspect of the cosmos. It should further be noted that *dhruvā dik* "the nadir" is equivalent to *āvāci dik* *MS*. II.13.21 (p.167,8), *adhastāt AS*. IV.40.5, *adharā dik*, comm. on *TB*. III.11.5.3. The name Varuṇa may itself originally have been an appellative for this subterranean domain, cf. VII.86.2b *kadā nv āntār vāruṇe bhuvāni*. But even if the name Varuṇa should not be a taboo substitute itself, the absence of a linguistic equivalent in the Avesta hardly allows far-reaching conclusions (Thieme, *JAOS*, 80, p. 308) as there is every reason to consider *Ahura Mazdā* a taboo substitute (*IIJ*, V, p. 55), whatever the older name may have been. With VII.86.2 cf. X.124.4.

deceive".⁶⁹ It is a well-known problem of Veda-interpretation, whether the word "deep" must here be taken in the sense of "profound, sagacious, grave, serious, solemn, secret, mysterious" (Monier-Williams) or in the literal sense of "dwelling in the depth of the earth". Geldner translates "in die Weite und Tiefe reichend", Hillebrandt less accurately "weithin sich ausdehnend". Since the literal acceptation is required for the compound adjective *uruśāmsa-* "whose words extend far and wide",⁷⁰ which also characterizes the Ādityas, the conclusion seems inevitable that Varuṇa, who has the attributes *uruśāmsa-* (I. 24.11, II.28.9, cf. III. 62.17) and *gambhīrāśāmsa-* (VII. 87.6), is characterized as one whose words extend both far and deep. A decisive argument in favour of this interpretation is the fact that the blessed dead are also called "deep".⁷¹

Therefore, when the sun is called an eagle (*suparṇā-*) who overlooks the air (*antārikṣāni*), but is at the same time the Asura "with the deep excitement" (*gambhīrāvepas-*),⁷² it should be remembered that the *suparṇā-* is said to be Varuṇa's messenger.⁷³ Similarly, the use of the variant form *gambhīrāvepas-* as an epithet of *ṛṣis* (seers)⁷⁴ should be connected with the fact that it was apparently in the nether world that Varuṇa made Vasiṣṭha an *ṛṣi*.⁷⁵ Finally, when the two Aśvins are called "seers of deep mind"⁷⁶ this should not be dissociated from the well-known fact that the *kavī* was an initiate, who had become *médhira-* like Varuṇa himself.⁷⁷ The notion of gods "belonging to the depth of the nether world" is an inheritance from Indo-Iranian mythology; it has often been pointed out that the term "deep Ahura" which the Avesta uses with reference to Mithra,⁷⁸ is fully parallel to the "wide and deep" Ādityas of the *Rigveda*.

4. The well-known hymn RS. VII. 88 relates how Varuṇa made Vasiṣṭha a seer (*ṛṣi-*, st. 3) and how the latter entered the god's house, there to see the wonder, viz. "the sun in the rock" (*svār yād āsman*).⁷⁹ Older trans-

⁶⁹ II.27.3 *tā ādityāsa urāvo gambhīrā ādabdhāso dipsanto bhūryakṣāḥ*. Cf. Geiger, *Die Aməša Spəntas*, pp. 214, 221, 247.

⁷⁰ Cf. also II.27.16 *āriṣṭā urāv ā śārman syāma*.

⁷¹ VI.75.9 *svāduṣamsādaḥ pītāro vayodhāḥ kṛchreśrītaḥ śāktivanto gambhīrāḥ*.

⁷² I.35.7 *vi suparṇo antārikṣāny akhyad gambhīrāvepā āsuraḥ sunīthāḥ*.

⁷³ X.123.6 *varuṇasya dūtām yamāsya yonau*.

⁷⁴ X.62.5 *virūpāsa id ṛṣayas tā id gambhīrāvepasāḥ*.

⁷⁵ VII.88.4 *vāsiṣṭhaḥ ha varuṇo nāvī dādhād ṛṣim cakāra svāpā mēdhobhīḥ*.

⁷⁶ VIII.8.2 *kāvī gambhīracetasā*.

⁷⁷ Cf., e.g., III, IV, p. 187, and AS. V.11.4 *nā tvād anyāḥ kavitaro nā medhāyā dhīrataro varuṇa svadhāvan*.

⁷⁸ Yt. 10.25 *ahurēm gufrēm*.

⁷⁹ Stanza 2: *svār yād āsmann adhipā u āndho 'bhi mā vāpur dṛśāye niniyāt*. Of fundamental importance for the interpretation of this verse is Lüders, *Varuṇa*, p. 317 ff.

lations used to render this as "the sun in the sky" but since there is not the slightest evidence in the *Rigveda*, apart from this passage, for the meaning "heaven", Oldenberg and Geldner have rightly rejected this interpretation.⁸⁰ Indeed, what the seer aspires to see is the mystery of Agni's presence in the darkness of the "stone house",⁸¹ just as it had been seen by those gods and mythical seers who (probably at the beginning of the new year) descended into the nether world as "sun-finders" (*svarvid-*, *svardfś-*).⁸²

The presence of the sun in Varuṇa's dwelling cannot surprise us, as the sun is only one of the forms of the god Agni. As was seen above, the sun sets there where Ṛta is hidden (i.e., in Varuṇa's domain), the sun when setting becomes Varuṇa, and Agni becomes Varuṇa in the evening (p. 107). Additional evidence might be *RS. X. 8.5b* (to Agni): "Thou becomest Varuṇa when thou comest (?) to Ṛta". Indeed, although Agni is said to have left the Asuras as a result of Indra's creation act (*X. 124.1, 3, 5*), there is a form of Agni in the nether world into which the setting sun "enters" and from which it arises in the morning (*AB. VIII. 28.9* and *13*). Hence Sūrya is called an *asuryāḥ purōhito* (*VIII. 101.12*, cf. Eliade, *Eranos Jahrbuch*, XXVII [1958], p. 207). From this nether world Agni is every day born anew. He is, indeed, born "from the waters, from the stone",⁸³

(Humbach denies any connexion between the Vedic hymn and, e.g., *Y. 43*; see *Die Gathas*, I, p. 14, II, p. 48). The real character of *svardfś-* "sun-seer" (*III, IV, p. 220*) appears from this passage, which also explains the original meaning of *hvara.darasa-*: this was certainly not "der den Blick der Sonne hat, sonnengleich blickend" (Bartholomae, *Altiran. Wörterb.*, col. 1849). Curiously enough, Lüders holds the contemplation of the "wonder" to be of minor importance (nebensächlich). Cf. especially *AS. V.1.8cd dārśan nū tā varuṇa yās te viṣṭhā āvārvṛtataḥ kṛṇavo vāpūṃṣi*.

⁸⁰ Geldner, *Der Rigveda in Auswahl*, II, *Kommentar* (1909), p. 114, Oldenberg, *Noten*, II (1912), p. 61, Lüders, *Varuṇa*, p. 318. The meaning "heaven" is still defended by Bartholomae, *Zum altiran. Wörterb.*, p. 173 n. 1, Neisser, *Zum Wörterbuch des Rgveda*, I (1924), p. 134; cf. also Hillebrandt, *Asia Major*, I (1924), p. 790: "die einzige Stelle, wo *āśman* "Himmel" bedeuten kann".

⁸¹ *X.46.3 jātā ā harmyēṣu*. Cf. the horse (= Agni) that Uttan̄ka sees in the *nāgaloka*: *Mhbh.* (crit. ed.) I.3.153, 157, 173. For *harmyā-* = *āśman-* see Geldner, *Kommentar*, p. 114.

⁸² See *III, IV*, pp. 220, 242, 271 (etc.), V, p. 177. In this sense one has also to take the words *X.154.5 kavāyo yé gopāyānti sūryam* "the seers who watch over the course of the sun". Cf. *X.67.4 tāmāsi jyōtir ichān* (Bṛhaspati), etc.

⁸³ *II.1.1bc tvām adbhyās tvām āśmanas pāri, tvām vānebhyas tvām ōśadhībhyas (... jāyase śuciḥ)*. The last three words might be interpreted naturalistically, as referring to the fire generated from the flint and the wood, but the first word ("from the waters") shows that the mythical birth is at the same time meant. In the Yajurvedic verse (*MS. II.13.13*: p. 162, 10; *KS. 40.3*: p. 136, 5ff.; *ĀpŚ. 16.35*) *yó apsv āntār agnir yó vṛtré yāḥ pūruṣe yó āśmani* (with a variant in *AS. III.21.1 yé agnāyo apsv āntār yé vṛtré yé pūruṣe yé āśmasu*) the reference to Vṛtra would seem to point to mythical, rather than natural-

or “born from the waters, from the cow, from Rta, from the rock”,⁸⁴ he is “the son of the rock”,⁸⁵ and Indra “generated [at the creation] the fire between two stones”.⁸⁶ Therefore it is for Agni “even in the rock [as it is] at home”.⁸⁷ Indra found “the treasure of Heaven” hidden in the rock like a bird’s young [in an egg].⁸⁸ The sun itself is once called a variegated stone placed in the midst of the sky,⁸⁹ and the dawns, thought of as cows, have a rock for their pen.⁹⁰

In connexion with the fact that the *vrajā-* or *valā-*, in which the cows are penned up, is sometimes called a “stone” (*āśman-*), or is said to be closed with a stone,⁹¹ attention may be drawn in passing to the remarkable circumstance that the Vedic description of Varuṇa’s subterranean palace as “supported by a thousand columns” (*sahāsrasthūṇa-* II. 41.5) or “the lofty building with a thousand doors” (*brhāntam mānaṁ sahāsradvāram* VII. 88.5), and that of the nether world as “secured by a hundred doors” (*śatādura-*),⁹² recurs almost *verbatim* in the description which the *Mahābhārata* gives of the *sabhā* in which the dicing between the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas is to take place (II. 45.46 crit.ed.):

*sthūṇasahasrair brhatīm śatadvārām sabhām mama
manoramām darśanīyām āśu kurvantu śilpinaḥ*

Let the artisans quickly build for me a *sabhā* which is supported by a thousand columns, lofty and secured by a hundred doors, pleasant and beautiful.

To this passage, quoted by Hillebrandt, *Asia Major*, I (1924), p. 787, others might be added, e.g., II. 51.17 crit. ed.:

istic, associations. For the latter see, e.g., Oldenberg, *Noten* I, p. 7. It should also be noted that Agni is at night the *mūrdhā bhūvo*, whence in the early morning the sun is born. Cf. *tātaḥ sūryo jāyate prātār udyān* X.88.6.

⁸⁴ IV.40.5d *abjā gojā ṛtajā adrijā rtām*.

⁸⁵ X.20.7 *ādreḥ sūnūm āyūm āhuḥ*.

⁸⁶ II.12.3 *yō āśmanor antār agnīm jajāna*.

⁸⁷ I.70.4c *ādrau cid asmā antār duroṇē*.

⁸⁸ I.130.3ab *āvindad divō nihitaṁ gūhā nidhīm vér nā gārbbham pārivitam āśmany anantē antār āśmani*.

⁸⁹ V.47.3cd (*aruṣāḥ suparnāḥ*) *mādhye divō nihitaḥ pṛśnir āśmā vi cakrame rājasas pāty āntau*. See on this stanza A. Kuhn, *Abh. kön. Preuss. Akad. Wiss.*, 1873, p. 144 f., Hillebrandt, *Asia Major*, I (1924), p. 790.

⁹⁰ IV.1.13cd *āśmavrajāḥ sudūghā vavrē antār úd usrā ājann uśāso huyānāḥ*.

⁹¹ IV.1.13; 16.6; VI.43.3, IX.108.6, X.68.4 (cf. Hillebrandt, *Asia Major*, I (1924), p. 789 f.); II. 24.4 *āśmāsyam avatām*; PB. XIX.7.1 *asurānāḥ vai valas tamasā prāvṛto śmāpīdhānaś cāsīt, tasmin gavyaṁ vasy antar āsīt, taṁ devā nāśaknuvan bhettuṁ*, etc. Cf. *Varuṇadeva* as the name of the stone slab of a well in Chamba State (III, IV, p. 249, V, p. 52).

⁹² I.51.3b *utātraye śatādureṣu gātuvīt*, which must refer to the nether world on account of a) *tvām gotrām āngirobhyo vṛṇor āpa* and the following stanza.

*sahasrastambhām hemavaidūryacitrām
śatadvārām toraṇasphāṭiśṛṅgām
sabhām agryām krośamātrāyatām me
tadvistārām āśu kurvantu yuktāḥ*

It does not seem possible to draw any other conclusion from this striking parallel than that the *sabhā* was meant as a replica of the nether world. The problem whether the *sāmiti*- may then be equated to the upper world remains unsolved.⁹³ Some confirmation of our conclusion may be found in the rule that a *sabhā* should be erected to the south of the town, which suggests some connexion with the realm of the dead.⁹⁴ I further refer to Held's ample discussion of the *sabhā* as the sacred initiation hall (*op. cit.*, p. 202 ff.), a discussion in which the religious importance of the door is also rightly stressed (p. 212). It is hardly a mere coincidence that Dvārakā, the "Town of Doors" (p. 215) is situated in the western-most part of India, in Kathiawar on the shore of the "western ocean" (like Pylos in Greece!). It may be suggested that the town was originally considered the sacred gate to Varuṇa's world (which is also situated in the west in the classificatory system).⁹⁵

It was pointed out above that the mythical cows are sometimes said to be penned up in a rock (*āśman*-), or in a *valā*- that was closed by an *āśman*-. As it is generally agreed that the cows stand for dawn, and as Dawn is said

⁹³ *III*, IV, p. 264. See also Held, *The Mahabharata* (1935), p. 237, Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben* (1879), p. 172 ff. Note however also *AS. XVIII.2.56 yamāsya sddanam sāmitiś cāva gachatāt*.

⁹⁴ *Āpastamba Dharma Sūtra II.25.5 dakṣiṇām purām sabhā*.

⁹⁵ See Held, *op. cit.*, pp. 162, 215 and W. B. Kristensen "De Symboliek van de Poort (etc.)" in *Symbool en Werkelijkheid*, pp. 215-224 (on Pylos, etc.). For Dvārakā cf. *Skānda Purāṇa VII.4.24.5 svargārohaṇaśreṇī vahate yatra Gomatī*. Only in passing can attention be drawn to the name of Sopara in Konkan (north of Bombay), which is perhaps a parallel case. Skt. *Śūrpāraka*-, *Sūrpāraka*-(*Mbh. Rām. MärkPur. VarBS.*) Pali *Suppāraka*-, *Sopāraka*- is generally derived from *śūrpa*-, n. "winnowing basket"; see, e.g., O. Stein, *ZII*, III (1925), p. 304 n. 2, Charpentier, *JRAS*, 1927, pp. 111-115. However, the *Jātakamālā*, p. 88 1.12, has the form *sūpāraka*:- *tadadhyuṣitaṁ ca patanaṁ supāragam ity evākhyātam āsit, yad etarhi sūpāragam iti jñāyate*. Cf. *supāraka*- in 88,15, 93,8 etc. According to the Indian tradition Konkan is the *kṣatra*- won by Paraśurāma (Charpentier, p. 113). In view of the geographical position of Sopara it would be tempting to connect its name with Varuṇa's epithet *supārākṣatra*- VII.87.6 (*supāraka*- being the region which gives an "easy crossing" to the setting sun) but Pa. *Suppāraka*- must then contain Prakritic gemination (also in *Souppara*, Periplus 52, *Souppāra* Ptolemy 1.6) and *Sūrpāraka*- must then be explained as a secondary Sanskritization, which it is difficult to accept. For Sopara see McCrindle, *Ancient India as described by Ptolemy*, p. 40f., B. Ch. Law, *Historical Geography of Ancient India* (1954?), p. 299, D. C. Sircar, *Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Medieval India* (1960), p. 31, etc.

to come "from the *harmyāṇi* in the East" (p. 108) it may be concluded that the cows' shed (*valā-*) was mythologically *equivalent* to the "stone house" (*harmyā-*) of the nether world, where the Vedic poets apparently also located the "sun in the rock" (*svār yād āśman*). On the other hand, the fact that some Vedic texts contain references to cows in the *sabhā-* is particularly interesting in the light of the theory that at that time the *sabhā-* was still a sacred hall where social contests took place.⁹⁶ If the presence of these cows was in some way connected with those contests (which, it is true, cannot be proved), the question may be raised if these contests also comprised the re-enactment of the mythical "driving out" of the cows from the *valā-*. Apart from all other considerations, these contests, when considered separately, point to the inference that they were looked upon as re-enactments of the primordial fight between Devas and Asuras for the creation (or, renewal) of life. In the absence of decisive evidence, however, this question cannot be answered.

It may be stated in conclusion that it is quite natural that the gods Mitra and Varuṇa, who reside in this subterranean palace where the sun is hidden in the rock, are themselves also "sun-seers".⁹⁷

5. During the night, however, this picture alters fundamentally. Varuṇa's nether world then extends over the earth as the night-sky. The cosmic waters are at that time a celestial ocean (*samudrā-*).⁹⁸ In a *brahmodya* that takes place between the adhvaryu and the hotṛ during the Aśvamedha ceremony, a cosmic riddle refers to it in the question "What is the pond that is equal to an ocean?", to which the answer is "The sky is the pond that is equal to the ocean".⁹⁹

When we consider the fact that the moon, which travels at night and illuminates Varuṇa's works (I.24.10) is said to run amidst the waters in the

⁹⁶ See the references in *III*, IV, pp. 246 f., 266, 277 f. For cows in the *sabhā* see Rau, *Staat und Gesellschaft im alten Indien* (1957), p. 76. The interpretation of the Yajurvedic prayer given in *III*, IV, p. 267, is incorrect.

⁹⁷ V.63.2b *vidāthe swardṛśā*.

⁹⁸ Max Müller, *SBE*, 32, p. 58. Cf., e.g., III.22.3 *agne divó āchā jigāsi*, VIII.26.17, VS. 13.31, Renou-Silburn, *JAs.*, 1949, p. 13, and Lüders, *Varuṇa*, p. 321: "... ergibt sich, dass man sich die Sonne in der Nacht in einem Felsen, zugleich aber auch im Meere im höchsten Himmel ruhend dachte, wobei es unklar bleibt, ob der Felsen in dem Meere liegt oder etwa das Meer umgibt. Aus diesem Meere erhebt sich die Sonne am Morgen ...". The same idea of the identity of the night-sky and the primeval waters occurs also in the Near East, see W. B. Kristensen, *Leven uit den Dood*, 1st ed. (1926), p. 119, *Symbol en Werkelijkheid* (1954), pp. 180, 271.

⁹⁹ VS. 23.47 (etc.) *kiṁ samudrāsamaṁ sārāḥ*. 48 *dyauḥ samudrāsamaṁ sārāḥ*. See further Lüders, *Varuṇa*, p. 111 f. and the critical remarks by K. Hoffmann, *OLZ*, 49 (1954), col. 393, and *JB*. I. 165 I.7 *ayam vāva samudro'nārambhaṇo yad idam antarikṣam*.

sky like Suparṇa (the celestial bird),¹⁰⁰ and that the waters “amidst which king Varuṇa moves forward looking *down* upon men’s truth and falsehood”¹⁰¹ must have been conceived as a celestial ocean, the inference that “the pond that is equal to an ocean” must be particularly the *night-sky* would seem cogent. Accordingly, the interpretation of Varuṇa’s “spies” (*spāśaḥ*) as stars in the night-sky (e.g., Lommel, *Oriens*, 6, p. 330) is likely to be correct. Indeed, Varuṇa “clasps the nights in his arms” (VIII. 41.3). It should also be noted in this connexion that the brāhmaṇas associate the Asuras with the night, and the Devas with the day (*ŚB.* XI. 1.6.1, *MS.* IV. 6.7, *KS.* VII.6). Cf. *MS.* IV. 7.8 (Varuṇa = ocean).

One general conclusion that may be drawn from these considerations is of sufficient importance to be stated here. The question whether Varuṇa was “primarily” a god of the waters, a chthonic, or a celestial god, has been the subject of fierce disputes. It should be stressed, therefore, that in the light of the preceding structural interpretation such disputes are senseless. I need not discuss here, e.g., the studies of Lüders, who held Varuṇa to be primarily the god of the waters, or those of J. J. Meyer, who stressed the chthonic aspects. Varuṇa is both the god of the primeval waters under the earth (and in the western ocean), of the “stone house” in the nether world, and of the night-sky. There is nothing in the Vedic material to suggest an evolution from “primary” notions about the god to “secondary” developments.¹⁰²

In the archaic cosmology of the Indo-Iranian people the observation that the sun after entering at evening the nether world in the west again rises the next morning in the east could only be explained by the theory that during the night the sun returns through the nether world from west to east. This idea, well-known from other mythologies, is attested in India in a variant form, which substitutes for the nether world its equivalent, viz. the night-sky. The nightly journey of the sun through the sky, however, necessitates the rather intricate theory of the “Nachtweg der Sonne” to explain how the sun could return, unseen, to the eastern horizon.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ *RS.* I.105.1 *candramā apsv āntār ā suparṇō dhāvate divi.*

¹⁰¹ VII.49.3 *yāsān rājā vāruṇo yāti mādhye satyānṛte avapāśyaṇ jānānām.* Cf. VIII. 47.11 *āditṛyā āva hī khyātādhi kūlād iva spāśaḥ.*

¹⁰² *Bijdragen Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 107 (1951), p. 81 n. 33. Renou, *Festgabe Lommel* (1960), p. 124, denies any connexion in the *Rigveda* between Varuṇa and the night except for VIII. 41.3. Similarly Thieme, *Mitra and Aryaman* (1957), p. 71. See on this problem also *IJJ*, III (1959), p. 210 f.

¹⁰³ Weber, *Ind. Stud.*, 9 (1865), p. 278, Bergaigne, *Religion Védique*, I. p. 7, Speyer, *JRAS*, 1906, pp. 723-727, Caland, *WZKM*, 26 (1912), p. 119 f., E. Sieg, “Der Nachtweg der Sonne nach der vedischen Anschauung”, *Gött. Nachr.*, 1923, p. 1 ff., E. Benda, *Der vedische Ursprung des symbolischen Buddhabildes* (1940), p. 3 ff.

We are not here concerned with the theory itself, but with its origin, which, as far as I am aware, has never been correctly explained. It will be clear that the mythological equivalence of nether world and night-sky could easily lead to such an explanation.

Of far greater importance, however, is the notion of the cosmic mountain which, as was seen above, is closely associated with that of Varuṇa's domain. When Varuṇa is said to support earth and heaven by means of the cosmic axis, it may safely be inferred that he must have been conceived as holding the foundations of the cosmic hill and the roots of the cosmic tree while sitting in his "stone house". Since this mountain lays upon the waters and is their receptacle (see p. 106f.) it must also be in the celestial ocean of the nocturnal sky.

It is there, indeed, but several details show unequivocally that during the night the nether world was thought of as hanging over the earth in an *inverted position*. The characteristic word to denote this, is *nīcīna-* "downward, hanging down". Thus Varuṇa turns the mythic cask (*kāvandha-*) upside down (*nīcīnabāra-*) to moisten the earth.¹⁰⁴ The same god holds the roots (lit. "tuft", *stūpa-*) of the cosmic tree, while its branches are hanging down (*nīcīna-*).¹⁰⁵ The "inverted tree" is well-known from many mythologies but it is desirable from a methodological point of view that comparative studies should be based on preliminary inquiries into the place of this tree in the context of each separate mythological system.

There are numerous valuable studies on the inverted tree in Indian mythology.¹⁰⁶ The main facts are the following: the identity of the tree as a *Ficus religiosa* (*āśvatthā-*) is first stated *expressis verbis* in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*: "With the root above and branches below is this everlasting *Āśvattha*". This verse is imitated in the *Bhagavadgītā*.¹⁰⁷ In the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* the same words occur with reference to a "tree" which is

¹⁰⁴ V.85.3 *nīcīnabāraṃ vāruṇaḥ kāvandham prā sasarja rōdasi antārikṣam | téna viśvasya bhūvanasya rājā yāvaṃ nā vr̥ṣtīr vy īnatti bhūma*. For the *kāvandha-*, which is apparently identical with *divāḥ kōṣam* V.53.6, the *ūtsa-* (I.64.6, II.24.4, VIII.7.16, X.30.9) see, e.g., Hillebrandt, *Asia Major*, I, p. 791, *Vedische Mythologie*, I², pp. 321 f., 325 f. and my note in *Bijdragen Kon. Inst.*, 107, p. 82.

¹⁰⁵ I.24.7 *abudhnē rājā vāruṇo vānasyordhvāṃ stūpaṃ dadate pūtādakṣaḥ | nīcīnā sthur upāri budhnā eṣām*

¹⁰⁶ Cf., e.g., E. Kuhn, *Festgruss Böhrling* (1888), p. 68 ff., L. v. Schroeder, *Festgruss E. Kuhn* (1916), p. 59 ff., and especially Coomaraswamy, *Qu. J. Myth. Soc.*, 29 (1938), pp. 111-149, M. B. Emeneau, "The Strangling Figs in Sanskrit Literature", *Univ. of Calif. Publ. in Class. Philol.*, vol. 13, no.10 (1949), pp. 345-370, F. D. K. Bosch, *The Golden Germ* (1960), p. 65 ff. (L. Rocher, *Dialoog*, IV/2 (1963-1964), p. 91, fails to notice the difference between the *āśvattha* and the *nyagrodha*.)

¹⁰⁷ *KU*. VI. 1 *ūrdhvamūlo 'vākṣākha eṣo 'śvatthaḥ sanātanaḥ, Gītā* 15.1 *ūrdhvamūlam adhaḥśākham āśvattham prāhur avyayam*.

not specified,¹⁰⁸ and the same is true of the Rigvedic passage: "In the unfathomable space king Varuṇa, he of purified intelligence, upholds the tree's *stūpa*-; they [= the branches] stand directed downwards. May their rays be fixed in us". In the speculations of the *Maitri-Upaniṣad* on the mystical brahman-tree, the "three-footed brahman" is said to have its roots above.¹⁰⁹

Whether or not the *aśvatthā*- is meant also in the earliest passages, is of minor importance. It cannot be questioned, at any rate, that everywhere the reference is to the inverted *cosmic tree*. Although the notion of such a tree must already have been familiar to the Aryans before they penetrated into the Indian subcontinent, here they must at some time have adopted the native habit of equating the mythic concept of the world tree with the *Ficus religiosa* instead of the oak or ash-tree. This habit can be traced back to the prehistoric civilizations of India in the chalcolithic age.¹¹⁰ Since the riddle-hymn *RS. I. 164* calls the cosmic tree an *aśvatthā*- (st. 22), it is possible that also the tree held by Varuṇa in *I. 24.7* was already identified with the fig-tree.

Many of the modern attempts at an interpretation fail to stress sufficiently the fact that all the Vedic passages clearly refer to a mystery, to an esoteric religious symbol: Whoever knows this tree is delivered from death, says the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*. Therefore naturalistic explanations which equate the inverted tree to the banyan-tree (*Ficus indica*) with its aerial roots¹¹¹ would seem particularly inadequate.¹¹² Thieme, who explains the tree as an image for the night-sky, holds that the notion originated in the concept that the cosmic tree has no "foundations" and, therefore, must be held from above.¹¹³

Curiously enough, the fact that it is Varuṇa who holds the tree has sel-

¹⁰⁸ *TA. I.11.5 ūrdhvamūlaṃ avākśākhāṃ vṛkṣaṃ yo veda saṃprati ...*

¹⁰⁹ *MU. VI.4 ūrdhvamūlaṃ tripād brahma, śākhā ākāśa-vāy-v-agny-udaka-bhūmy-ādāya, eko 'śvatthanāmai, 'tad brahmai, 'tasyai 'tat tejo yad aśā ādityaḥ.*

¹¹⁰ Marshall, *Mohenjo-Daro and the Indus Civilization*, I (1939), p. 63 ff. (quoted by Bosch, *op. cit.*, p. 68).

¹¹¹ E.g., Geldner, *Ved. Stud.*, I (1888), p. 113 ff., Emeneau, *l.c.*, p. 347, Bosch, *op. cit.*, p. 69, n. 12 (with references), Renou, *Ét. véd. et pāṇ.*, VII, p. 72 f. Emeneau rightly points out that the "upside-down" tree is a cosmological imagining of great antiquity in the culture centers of Eurasia, and one which came to be identified with local flora and thus was re-interpreted. He wisely refrains from attaching too much value to the rôle of the *aśvatthā* as an epiphyte.

¹¹² L. von Schroeder, *l.c.*, p. 67, rightly observes: "Aus dem Leben ist das kaum gegriffen, und ein wirklich befriedigend klares Bild verbindet sich nicht damit", Cf. also Deussen, *Allgem. Gesch. d. Philos.*, I/1, p. 182, Fr. Weller, *Versuch einer Kritik der Kaṭhop.*, p. 174 f. n. 7.

¹¹³ *Untersuchungen zur Wortkunde und Auslegung des Rigveda*, p. 67 n. 2.

dom (if ever) been given due consideration. From the circumstance that he supports earth and heaven "in the seat of Ṛta", it was inferred above that he must consequently support the world axis "from below" (*adhastāt*, as the epic says of the serpent Śeṣa). In other words, the inverted tree of Vedic mythology must be connected with the idea that in the nocturnal aspect of the cosmos the sky is the nether world (that is, the cosmic waters and the mountain with the tree) turned upside down. To some extent Benda was right in assuming the identity of earth (*kṣām-*) and night-sky, but his conclusion that the earth was thought of as extending upwards at night as far as the shining sky (*dyū-*) and as covering and concealing this, cannot be correct. The inversion of the position of nether and upper world is something quite different from an upward expansion of the earth.

In conclusion the fact should be stressed that if the sun returns at night to the eastern horizon through the night-sky = nether world, the "sun in the rock", accordingly, is during the night in the sky.

6. This conclusion furnishes the clue to a correct understanding of Old Iranian cosmology. It can hardly be questioned, indeed, that the Old Iranian use of the word *asman-* in the sense of "heaven" owes its origin to the ancient Aryan concept of the inverted mountain in the night-sky.¹¹⁴ The Avestan phrase *asmanəm x^vanvantəm* "sunny sky" (orig. "rock with sun"),¹¹⁵ although probably re-interpreted, still reflects the ancient idea of the *svār yād āsman*. Its religious significance appears from its use as a personal name *Asmō.x^vanvant-*. Most instructive, however, is the fact that not only has *asnvant-* "rocky"¹¹⁶ become the name of a certain mountain (which is only natural), but so has *x^vanvant-* "possessing the sun". This indirectly indicates that in earlier (prehistoric) times the phrase *asman- x^vanvant-* still referred to the primordial hill and to the religious concept of the *svār yād āsman*. The epithet of the primordial hill was only secondarily transferred to a real mountain, which accordingly must have been regarded as a replica of the mythical mountain.

When Zarathustra says that the holy Spirit "is clothed in the hardest heavens",¹¹⁷ this remarkable epithet still preserves a reminiscence of the

¹¹⁴ Against Reichelt's theory of "Der steinerne Himmel" in *IF*, 32 (1913), pp. 25-57 and Hertel's elaboration in *Die Himmelstore im Veda und Avesta* (= *Indoir. Quellen u. Forsch.*, II) (1924), see Hillebrandt, *Asia Major*, I, pp. 785-792, Benveniste-Renou, *Vrtra et Vrθragna*, p. 191 n. 3, Charpentier, *Brahman*, p. 12 n. 2.

¹¹⁵ *Visp.* 7.4, *Vend.* 19.35, *Sir.* 2.27.

¹¹⁶ In *asnvantəm gairim*, see *Altiran. Wörterb.*, col. 220.

¹¹⁷ *Y.* 30.5b *yō xraoždīštāng asēnō vastē*; cf. *YAv. xruždisma-* "hard earth". According to Nyberg, *Iran's forntida Religioner*, p. 493, this is "a much more primitive idea" than

"rock" in the night-sky: for it is, indeed, the nocturnal sky "which Mazdā wears as a mantle studded with stars",¹¹⁸ and this mantle is only the nocturnal aspect of the "fixed abodes" (*dhruvāḥ kṣitāyah*), the "rock" (*āś-man-*) in which Varuṇa dwells. The special use of the word *asman-* in Avestan to denote "heaven" (although it continued to be used, beside *asəṅga-*, in the sense of "stone") is also found in Old Persian, e.g. DNa 1-3 *Baga vazrka Auramazdā haya imām būmim adā, haya avam asmānam adā* "A great god is Ahuramazdā, who created this earth, who created yonder sky". This lexical fact can hardly be dissociated from the data which point to the conclusion that the greater part of Ancient Iran (with a few exceptions such as the Śakas¹¹⁹ and perhaps the religion described by Herodotus) laid special stress on that aspect of the Old Aryan religion that was more particularly concerned with the nether world and, accordingly, professed some form of Mazdeism. As we know from the Veda, this aspect comprised initiation and apparently was (like many religions concerned with the gods of the nether world) a mystery religion. Iran gave the cult of the mystery god(s) a marked preference to that of the heavenly gods. The specific Iranian religion of Ahura Mazdā can only be understood as the result of a development which laid such a heavy stress on the personal relation to the mystery god that this completely ousted the worship of the other group of gods.

Some serious misinterpretations of Aryan mythology are the inevitable result of the failure to recognize the mythological equivalence of the nether world and the night-sky. It must be regretted that even Lüders in his reconstruction of Vedic cosmology has failed to draw this ultimate conclusion from the materials which he has so judiciously studied. K. Hoffmann has rightly pointed out, how weak the foundations were upon which his theory of the celestial ocean was based.¹²⁰

At first sight, it is true, the statements of the Veda may seem fully contradictory. Thus, when Uṣas, who is "born in Rta" and is a kinswoman of Varuṇa,¹²¹ is said to awake from "the seat of Rta" (which is also called "the stone house", "the rock of Heaven", "the cave", "the womb of the

Reichelt's "stone sky". It has undoubtedly been inherited from the mythology of the proto-Indo-Iranian people but is not particularly "primitive".

¹¹⁸ *Yt.* 13.3 *yim Mazdā vaste vanhanəm stahrpaēsəṅhəm mainyū.tāštəm*. Cf. also Bartholomae, *Arische Forschungen*, II, p. 123, Wikander, *Vāyu*, p. 30.

¹¹⁹ Abaev, "Skifskij byt i reforma Zoroastra", *Archiv Orientalni*, 24 (1956), p. 52; Benveniste, *Études sur la langue ossète*, p. 129.

¹²⁰ *OLZ*, 49 (1954), col. 391.

¹²¹ I.118.12 *rtejdā*, I.123.5 *vāruṇasya jāmīr* ("sister", Renou, *Études sur le vocabulaire du RV.*, p. 49). With *rtejdā*- cf. W. B. Kristensen, *Leven uit den Dood*, p. 131.

mountain" or simply "the mountain")¹²² it would seem natural, in the light of the preceding remarks about the "stone house", to take all these statements as referring to the nether world, in spite of the word *divó* "of Heaven", which has once been added. In another passage, however, she is said to come "even from the light of Heaven".¹²³ This light, which (if the preceding interpretation is correct) must be situated in the darkness of the nether world, leads us back to our starting-point, the "bliss of Aša which manifests itself together with the lights".

7. The preceding observations may have served to show that the image which Zarathustra formed of Ahura Mazdā's celestial world, though perhaps re-interpreted in details, was still essentially based upon the ancient Aryan concept of the inverted mountain in the night-sky. Just as Mitra and Varuṇa, as lords of the cosmic mystery, knew the secret of "the sun in the rock" and were, therefore, "sun-seers", so, with a transfer of the epithet from the lord to his domain, Ahura Mazdā's *xšaθra-* is called "sun-seeing" in the Gathas.¹²⁴

Ṛta is hidden (*āpihitam* V. 62.1) in the nether world, as the sun is in the "rock" (VII. 88.2). If, however, this nether world and this rock were equated to (or, localized in) the cosmic mountain, which in its turn is mythologically equivalent to the whole earth, it must be taken into consideration that "the earth lies spread on the waters".¹²⁵ So there must be some connexion between Ṛta, the Sun, and the cosmic waters under the earth. That "Agni hidden in the waters" was one of the central religious concepts of the Rigveda need hardly be mentioned, nor need the importance of the myth of the mysterious birth of the Golden Germ (*Hiraṇyagarbhā-*) be stressed. This connexion explains why the waters are said to be "know-

¹²² IV.51.8 *ṛtāsya ... sādaso*, VII.76.2 *harmyāni* (cf. Geldner, *Kommentar*, p. 114 and see III, IV, p. 226, where the accent of *harmyā-* should be corrected), V.45.1 *divó ... ādriṃ*, 2 *ūrvād*, 3 *pārvatasya gārbho, pārvato*, see Lüders, *Varuṇa*, p. 325 ff. The horses of the Sun are said to come, like Uṣas, from the seat of Ṛta: I.164.47 *tā dāvaytran sādānād ṛtāsya*.

¹²³ I.49.1 *divás cid rocanād ādhi*.

¹²⁴ Y.43.16d *x^oāng.darəsōi xšaθrōi*, which hardly means "den Anblick der Sonne gewährend, sonnengleich anzuschauen" (Bartholomae, *Altiran. Wörterb.*, col. 1880, Geiger, *Die Aməša Spəntas*, p. 210). According to Humbach, *Die Gathas*, II, p. 36 (ad 32.13a) *xšaθra-* sometimes denotes the ruler himself. His rendering in vol. I, p. 15 "im sonnengleichen Machtbereich" differs from that in *MüSS*, I, p. 28 n. 1 (*x^oāng darəsōi* "damit die Sonne geschaut werde"). See also vol. II, p. 52. It must be admitted that also in the compound the genitive *x^oāng-* is hard to explain. Cf. *hvarə.darəsā-*, *hvarə.darəsā* and *hvarə-darəsya-*.

¹²⁵ ŚB. VII.4.1.8 *āpo vai puṣkaraṃ tāsām iyaṃ paṇaṃ, yathā ha vā idaṃ puṣkarapaṇam apsv adhyāhitam, evaṃ iyaṃ apsv adhyāhitā*. Cf. AB. III.6.4 *prthivy apsu (pratīṣṭhi-tā* (note 52), and Lüders, *Varuṇa*, p. 121 ff.

ing Rta" and "possessing the sun", and why Rta is sometimes called "luminous".¹²⁶

Somewhat parallel statements are found in Zarathustra's songs. While the *Rigveda* says that the sun is the face or appearance (*ānīka-*) of the Rta,¹²⁷ Zarathustra calls Aša "possessing the sun" (*x^vānvaī* 32.2b)¹²⁸ and in later texts Aša's dwellings are described as *x^vānvaitīš*.¹²⁹ On the other hand, it was stated above that the idea of darkness was closely associated with the nether world (see p. 108). So the *rocanā-* or *jyōtiṣ-* and the *raocah-* which according to the texts were present in this world require some elucidation.

RS. IX. 113, a hymn to Soma, ends with a vision of celestial beatitude which the poet hopes to attain to. The last stanzas 7-11 run as follows:¹³⁰

7. Where there is the eternal light, in which world the sun has been placed, in that immortal, imperishable world put me, O *pavamāna*!
8. Where dwells king Yama, where there is the descent from heaven (*avaróḍhanam divāḥ*), where are the flowing waters, there make me immortal.
9. Where one can freely wander about in the threefold firmament, in the

¹²⁶ AS. IV.2.6 *amīṭā rtañḍāḥ* (cf. N. J. Shende, *BDCRI*, IX [1949], p. 271 f.), RS. I.10.8, V.2.11, VIII.40.10f. *svārvatīr apāḥ*; I.136.2 *pānīhā rtāsya sām ayañsta raśmibhiḥ* (cf. Yt. 13.57 *yā strām māñhō hūrō anayranqm raocanham paṭō daēsayēn ašaontīš?*), JB. III.359 *rtam jyotiṣmad* (ex conjectura).

¹²⁷ VI.51.1 *ūd u tyāc cākṣur māhi mitrāyor āñ ēti priyām varuṇayor ādabdham* | *rtāsya śuci darśatām ānikam rukmō nā divā ūditā vy ādyaut*. See Griswold, *Religion of the Rigveda* (1923), p. 135, Geiger, *Die Amāsa Spēntas* (1916), p. 176.

¹²⁸ Not "the glorious light", Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, p. 355.

¹²⁹ *x^vānvaitīš ašahe vərəzō* Y.16.7 (etc.). See Geiger, *Die Amāsa Spēntas*, pp.176, 201. Humbach, *IF*, 63, p. 48 compares RS. *vṛjāne svārvatī*. For Aša and fire see also Duchesne-Guillemin, *East and West*, 13 (1962), p. 201. That Ahura Mazdā's name has later come to denote the sun (Khot. *urmaysde*, Yidya, Munjī *ormōzd*, see Bailey, *Iranistik* I, p. 134) is hardly connected with these ancient Aryan conceptions.

¹³⁰ 7 *yātra jyōtir ājasrañ yāsmiñ lokē svār hitām*
tāsmiñ mām dhehi pavamānā 'mīte lokē ākṣita
indrāyendo pāri srava

8 *yātra rājā vaivasvatō yātrāvaróḍhanam divāḥ*
yātrāmūr yahvātīr āpas tātra mām amītañ kṛdhi, etc.

9 *yātrānukāmāñ cāraṇam trinākē tridivē divāḥ*
lokā yātra jyōtiṣmantas tātra mām amītañ kṛdhi, etc.

10 *yātra kāmā nīkāmās ca yātra bradhnāsya viṣṭāpam*
svadhā ca yātra tṛptīś ca tātra mām amītañ kṛdhi, etc.

11 *yātrānandās ca mōdās ca mūdāḥ pramūda āsate*
kāmasya yātrāptīḥ kāmās tātra mām amītañ kṛdhi, etc.

The refrain has been omitted in the translation. For Vedic ideas about the world of the dead, cf., e.g., Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben* (1879), p. 410 ff., N. J. Shende, *BDCRI*, IX (1949), pp. 251, 254, etc. (data from the *Atharvaveda*). Otherwise *BAU*. IV.3.10.

threefold heaven, where are the luminous worlds, there make me immortal.

10. Where wishes and desires are (realized), where there is the highest point of the sun, where are the food offered to the deceased ancestors and satisfaction, there make me immortal.

11. Where joys, pleasures, various forms of gladness and delight are seated, where the highest wishes are obtained, there make me immortal.

Irrespective of whether, in a visionary state of mind, the poet here aspires to see the bliss of the blessed dead or rather prays for a place in the "immortal world" in afterlife¹³¹, this much is clear that this is the traditional picture of the blissful life in Yama's realm. With *vaivasvatāḥ*, the patronymic which denotes Yama in st. 8, cf. X. 14.1 "Vivasvant's son, who brings together the men, king Yama".¹³²

As stated above (p. 109), Yama's world is at the same time Varuṇa's. This world, which Yama gives as a resting-place to the deceased and which is "adorned with days, waters, and rays"¹³³ is Yama's "stone house".¹³⁴ That the water (*salilā-*) in the world of the Fathers which is mentioned in AS. XVIII. 3.8 need not refer to a celestial ocean was rightly stressed by K. Hoffmann, *OLZ*, 1954, col. 392.

Here is the *avaródhanam divāḥ* (st. 8), which words, though generally rendered by "closed place of Heaven",¹³⁵ are more likely to mean "the descent from heaven" and to refer to the place "where they unharness the horses of the Sun" (V. 62.1). Just as *Ait. Br.* IV. 14.5 opposes *saṁvat-sarasyā 'varodhanam* "descent of the year" to *udrodhanam* "ascent", and just as *Kauś. S.* 98 uses *avarodha-* "downward movement" as the opposite of *rodha-*, the Rigvedic expression *avaródhanam divāḥ* must be taken as contrasting with *āródhanam divāḥ* "ascent to heaven" (RS. I. 105.11, IV. 7.8; 8.2, 4). The *dh* has been longer preserved in the nominal derivative than in the verb: the *Ait. Br.* uses *praty-avarohati* IV. 21.3 beside *avarodhanam* IV. 14.5 (but has also *dūrohanam*). Cf. *Ai. Gramm.*, I, pp. 250, 252.

¹³¹ X.17.4 *yātrāsate sukṛto yātra té yayūṣ tātva tvā devāḥ savitā dadhātu*, AS. VI.120.3, VS. XV.50, etc.

¹³² *vaivasvatām saṁgāmanam jānānām yamām rājānam*.

¹³³ X.14.9 *dhobhir adbhir aktūbhir vyaktaṁ yamā dadāty avasānam asmai*. Cf. the *yahvātīr āpaḥ* in IX.113.8.

¹³⁴ X.114.10 *yadā yamā bhāvati harmyé hitāḥ*, AS, XVIII.4.55 *yāthā yamāya harmyām āvapan pāñca mānavāḥ* (see Shende, *BDCRI*, IX, p. 249).

¹³⁵ E.g., *PW*, I, col. 486, Monier-Williams ("a closed or private place, the innermost part of anything"), and the discussion in Neisser, *Zum Wörterbuch des Rgveda*, I (1924), p. 129. Hertel's interpretation in *Die Himmelstore im Veda und Avesta* (1924), p. 47, is unacceptable.

If this interpretation is correct, the words "where the sun has been placed" in st. 7 must necessarily refer to the "sun in the rock". Indeed, the deceased man after reaching Yama's world gets back his eyes and *sees the sun* (AS. XVIII. 2.46). The "threefold firmament" mentioned in st. 9¹³⁶ may again refer to the night-sky but the words "the highest point of the sun" (*bradhñāsya viṣṭāpam*) in st. 10 present some difficulties. Only the notion of the nightly journey of the sun through the sky from the western to the eastern horizon can account for the idea that the sun reaches a summit (*viṣṭāpa-*) at night too, just as Varuṇa is said to be in the highest heaven (X. 14. 7-8). Although it is nowhere stated in the material collected by Sieg (see n. 103), the sun when turning in the evening towards the east (cf., e.g., I. 115.5 *yadéd āyukta haritaḥ sadhāsthād*, Sieg, p. 5 "umschirren"), must again ascend the vault of heaven. Incidentally, an indication that the journey back led the sun through the world of the dead is perhaps contained in the words of I. 164.38ab *āpāñ prāñ eti svadhāyā grbhītó 'martyo mārtyenā sāyonih*, which Sieg (p. 8) renders as follows: "Abgewandt geht er nach Osten, geleitet von seiner Gotthaftigkeit, unsterblich teilt er mit den Sterblichen den Wohnsitz".

Thus we are entitled to state that according to the Rigveda Yama's and Varuṇa's world contains the eternal light and is luminous.

8. It is not necessary for our purpose to give a more detailed account of the occurrence of light in the Vedic descriptions of the blissful life of the dead. What can be done is to reconstruct, on the basis of the texts, the cosmological ideas about light in the darkness of the nether world, which obviously was considered a mystery, no less than was the presence of potential life in death. The parallelism of light and life in ancient Aryan thought is indeed too well-known to need special discussion. What cannot be reconstructed, however, is the correlate of this cosmological notion in the religious experience of the individuals. Of the ecstasy which accompanied this experience a precious document has been preserved in RS. VI. 9.6. One gets the impression that the seer, by meditating upon the sacrificial fire (st. 5), attained a vision of the cosmic mystery, the "sun in the rock" (or, Agni in the nether world, into which the sun enters in the evening and from which it arises in the morning, AB. VIII. 28.9 and 13). Some other passages, too, may perhaps be explained as referring to the seer's entering the nether world,¹³⁷ but all details inevitably escape us. How-

¹³⁶ AS. XVIII.4.3 *trīṭiye nāke ādhi*, etc., see Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben*, p. 410, Lüders, *Varuṇa*, p. 61, etc.

¹³⁷ Cf. perhaps I.22.14 *vīprā ... gandharvāsya dhruvé padé*.

ever, such general aspects as are still sufficiently clear entitle us to state that Agni's birth, or the vision of the sun in the darkness, was the central theme of what can be denoted by no other term than Aryan *mysticism*.¹³⁸

This conclusion may prove of material interest for the study of later forms of Indian mysticism but a discussion of this problem lies outside the scope of this article. Only in passing, therefore, attention may be drawn to the fact that the words "in which world the sun is placed" (*yāsmiñ loké svār hitām* IX. 113.7), when compared with "the sun in the rock" (*svār yād āsman* VII. 88.2), suggests the idea that the later speculation of the Upaniṣads about the *ātman* "placed in the cavity" is a direct continuation of the older mystical speculation of the Veda.

In the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* I. 14-19 Yama instructs Naciketas in the cult of the fire: "I will declare to thee – mark me well – the fire that leads to heaven, which I know well. Know that this (fire), which is a means of acquiring the infinite world and which is the foundation (of this world) is placed in the cavity".¹³⁹ After Friedrich Weller's detailed discussion of the last word it can no longer be questioned that *guhāyām* must mean "in der Höhle des Herzens", and that the following verses, which deal with the arranging of the Nāciketa-fire, must be a later interpolation.¹⁴⁰ The second chapter, indeed, which is devoted to the *ātman* doctrine, has the following verses: (12) "The wise who by means of meditation on his Self recognizes the ancient whom it is difficult to behold, who has entered into the hidden, who is placed in the cavity, who dwells in the abyss and who exists from times of old, as God, he leaves joy and sorrow behind", and (20) "The Self, which is subtler than what is subtle, greater than what is great, is placed in the cavity of that creature. He, who is free from desire and from grief, beholds the majesty of the Self by the grace of the Creator".¹⁴¹ The last verse also occurs with some variant readings in *Taitt.Ār.* X. 10.1, *Mahānār. Up.* VIII.3 and *Śvet.Up.* III.20.

That the "cavity of this living being" is identical with the heart cannot

¹³⁸ It should be noted that in the *Atharva Veda* Varuṇa is the great teacher (*ācārya*–) See Renou, *Festgabe Lommel*, p. 127 and cf. *RS.* VII.87.4 *uvāca me vāruṇo mēdhirāya trīḥ sapta nāmāghnyā bibharti/vidvān padāsya gūhyā nā vocat*, VIII.41.5 *yā usrñām apicyā veda nāmāni gūhyā*, etc.

¹³⁹ I.14 *anantalokāptim atho pratiṣṭhām viddhi tvam enaṁ nihitaṁ guhāyām*.

¹⁴⁰ Friedrich Weller, *Versuch einer Kritik der Kaṭhōpaniṣad* (Berlin 1953), p. 6 ff.

¹⁴¹ II.12 *taṁ durdarśaṁ gūḍhaṁ anupraviṣṭaṁ guhāhitaṁ gahvareṣṭhaṁ purāṇam / adhyātmayogādhiḡamena devaṁ matvā dhiro harṣaśokau jahāti*; 20 *aṇor aṇiyān mahato mahiyān ātmāsya jantor nihito guhāyām tam akraṭuḥ paśyati vītaśoko dhātu(r) prasādān mahimānaṁ ātmanaḥ*. For *gūḍhaṁ anupraviṣṭam* cf. III.1 *guhāṁ praviṣṭau*, IV.6,7 *guhāṁ praviṣya*, and Nyāsa Upan. 2 *guhāṁ praveṣṭum icchāmi* (quoted by Jacobs, *Concordance*, s.v. *guhā*).

indeed be doubted in view of, e.g., *Chând. Up.* VII. 3.3 "this *âtman* is in the heart".¹⁴² Regnaud and Hillebrandt have already pointed to the parallelism between the Vedic mythological concept of Agni hidden in a secret place and *agni/âtman* which here is *nihito guhâyâm*,¹⁴³ but they did not recognize that what we find in the *Kaṭha Up.* is not merely "ein der älteren Mythologie geläufiger, aber hier philosophisch umgewerteter Begriff" (as Hillebrandt put it) but a direct continuation of an old Vedic tradition of meditative practices.

It would require a special study to demonstrate the parallelism which for the Vedic poets exists between the macrocosmic opening of the primordial hill and the microcosmic opening of the mind, as the result of Indra's *vrtrahátya*-. I must confine myself to the statement that the Rigvedic seer gets his vision with or in his heart (*hr̥dā* or *hr̥dī*).¹⁴⁴ This heart is equated to the cosmic mountain and its subterranean ocean. Hence it is that the *Rigveda* refers to the "ocean of the heart" (IV. 58.5 *hr̥dyāt samudrāt*, cf. 11 *antāḥ samudrē hr̥dy antār*) and divine inspiration is looked upon as an "opening of the doors of the mind" that is parallel to the opening of the cosmic "enclosure" (*vrajā*-).¹⁴⁵ Just as the Rigvedic poet prays that Agni may open his "thought" like an aperture (*khā*-, viz. in the cosmic hill of the primeval world),¹⁴⁶ so the *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* says that Prajāpati, who is "hidden in the cavity" of the heart, pierces from within the *khāni* (of the mind) to "enjoy the objects".¹⁴⁷ If it may be assumed that *guhâyām* in the *Upaniṣads* is a substitute of the later language for such Rigvedic terms as *vrajé*, *ūrvé*, *ásman*, which all denote the nether world viewed as an enclosure, the parallelism between the revelation of "the sun in the rock" and the *Upaniṣadic* vision of the *âtman* "placed in the

¹⁴² *sa vā eṣa âtmā hr̥dī*, VI. 17 *hr̥daye saṁniviṣṭaḥ*. Cf. *Mahānār. Upan.* II.6 *sa ... abhyantaram prāviṣat ~ sa vā eṣa pañcadhā 'tmānaṁ vibhajya nihito guhâyām ~ sa vā eṣo 'smaddhṛdantarād akṛtārtho 'manyata*, TB. I, 2.1.3 *guhā śarīrasya madhye*.

¹⁴³ Paul Regnaud, *La Katha Upaniṣad* (Paris-Lyon, 1898), p. 117, Hillebrandt, *Aus Brāhmaṇas und Upaniṣaden*, n. 142 (both quoted by Weller, *op. cit.*, p. 6, n. 6 and n. 8).

¹⁴⁴ Cf., e.g., RS. I.24.12 *tād ayān kēto hr̥dā ā vi caṣṭe*, VII.33.9 *tā in nīnyān hr̥dayasya praketaiḥ sahāsravaṣām abhi sārī caranti* ("sie dringen nach den Ahnungen ihres Herzens in das tausendfach verzweigte Geheimnis ein" Geldner), X.129.4 *satō bāndhum āsati nīr avindan hr̥dī pratīṣya kavāyo manīṣā*, 177. 1 *patanḡam aktām āsurasya māyāyā hr̥dā paśyanti mānasā vipaścitaḥ | samudrē antāḥ kavāyo vi cakṣate*, etc., and *Mahānār. Up.* I.12 *na cakṣuṣā paśyati kaś canainaṁ hr̥dā manīṣā manasā 'bhikṣptaḥ*. Cf. also Geldner's note ad I.171.2 on *hr̥dā ... mānasā*, Renou, *Études sur le vocabulaire du RV.*, I, p. 60 f. and Av. *zərədācā mananḡhācā* Y.31.12.

¹⁴⁵ See in general III, IV, p. 249.

¹⁴⁶ IV.11.2 *vī śāhy agne gr̥natē manīṣān khān vēpasā tuvijāta stāvānaḥ*. See III, l.c.

¹⁴⁷ II.6 *sa vā eṣo 'smaddhṛdantarād akṛtārtho 'manyatā 'rthān āśāniti. atāḥ khānīmāni bhittvoditaḥ pañcabhi rāsmibhir viṣayān attiti*. Similarly *Kaṭha Up.* IV.1. For the macrocosmic parallel cf. e.g., RS. VII.82.3 *ānv apān khāny atṛntam ojasā*.

cavity" is apparent. The circumstance that not only the fire (*Kaṭha Up.* I. 14) but also Prajāpati (*Maitr. Up.* II. 6), Puruṣa (*Muṇḍ. Up.* II. 1.10) and the *udgītha* (*Maitr. Up.* VI. 4) are said to be hidden in the cavity¹⁴⁸ points to the conclusion that the notions associated with the "cavity" were rooted in mythology. As was stated above, it is, however, not possible to go more deeply into the problems of later mystical speculations.

This Old Aryan mysticism is also directly reflected in Zarathustra's phraseology. When he speaks of *manaḥhō vañhēuš xʷānvañ hañhuš* 53.4c, which Lommel renders as "'lichtvollen Gewinn des guten Denkens' als himmlischer Lohn"¹⁴⁹ the mere mention of a "reward that contains the sun" shows that there are still traces of Old Aryan mysticism in Zarathustra's preaching. Schaefer's characterization of this religion as "archaische Mystik"¹⁵⁰ would seem to be fully justified.

In Zarathustra's hymns references were found both to "Aša with the sun" (32.2b) and to "the bliss of Aša, which manifests itself together with the lights" (30.1c), whilst analogous phrases occur in later texts. Thus Ahura Mazdā promises to lead the soul of the pious thrice across the bridge "to the best existence, to the best Aša, to the best lights".¹⁵¹ The pious man, in his turn, worships Ahura Mazdā "Whose is the cow, Whose is Aša, Whose are the lights, with Whose light the paradise is filled".¹⁵² The yazata Rašnu is invoked in the words: "Whether thou, O holy Rašnu! art in the bright, all-happy, blissful abode of the holy Ones, we invoke, we bless Rašnu, the strong".¹⁵³

Especially significant is the close connexion that exists between the blissful life and Aša. First of all, this concerns the beatitude of the dead: according to Xerxes the pious man "becomes blessed (*rtāvā*) when

¹⁴⁸ A mythical background of the concept of *guhā* is also suggested by the fact that some texts say that the "cavity" is in the highest heaven, cf. *Taitt. Ār.* VIII.2, *Taitt. Up.* II.1.1 (on the brahman) *yó véda nihitaṁ gūhāyām paramé vyòman, sò 'śnute sárvaṁ kāmān, sahā brāhmaṇā vipaścīteti* (see *Sāyana* ad TA.), *Mahānār. Up.* X.5 *pareṇa nākaṁ nihitaṁ guhāyām vibhrājate yad yatayo viśanti, Muṇḍ. Up.* III.1.17 *dūrāt sudūre tad ihāntike ca paśyatsv ihaiva nihitaṁ guhāyām, KaṭhaUp.* III.1 *guhāṁ praviṣṭau parame parārdhe*. See n. 142 and cf. *ChU.* III.13.7 for the macrocosmic parallelism.

¹⁴⁹ *Wörter und Sachen*, 19 (1938), p. 243; cf. also *Die Religion Zarathustras* (1930), p. 203.

¹⁵⁰ See Lentz, *ZDMG*, 103 (1953), p. 431 f. with references. K. Rudolph's criticisms ("etwas unglücklich als archaische Mystik bezeichnet") and the contrast with "ein klarer Kopf" which he supposes to be inherent in mysticism (*Numen*, 8 [1961], p. 107 f.) can only be explained from a not uncommon but nonetheless erroneous notion of mysticism.

¹⁵¹ *Y.*19.6 *ā vahištāt aṇhaoī, ā vahištāt ašāt, ā vahištaēibyō raocābyō*.

¹⁵² *Y.*12.1 *yejhē gāuš, yejhē ašəm, yejhē raocā, yejhē raocābiš rōiθwən xʷāθrā* [= 31.7a].

¹⁵³ *Yt.*12.36 *upa vahištəm ahūm ašaonəm raocayhəm višpō.xʷāθrəm* [= *Y.*68.13].

dead",¹⁵⁴ and in the *Yasna Haptanhāiti* the faithful pray to Ahura Mazdā to grant a reward for this life and for after-life "so that we may obtain that, viz. the union with Thee and with Aša to all eternity".¹⁵⁵ Perhaps the adjective *ašō.aṇhan-* Yt. 13.151, used with reference to "previous teachers", was meant in this sense, if it may be taken as "der sich das Aša erworben hat" (Bartholomae).

In the *Rigveda*, however, the knowledge of the cosmic order is not only the prerogative of the gods and the blessed dead (e.g., RS. X. 15.1), but also of the initiated seers (*kavi-*, X. 64.16), to whom such epithets as *rtajñā-* "knowing the cosmic order", *rtāvan-* etc., are almost exclusively attributed.¹⁵⁶ One of these seers was Vasiṣṭha, whom "the skilful [Varuṇa] made an *ṛṣi* by his power"¹⁵⁷ and in the hymn of his vision (VII. 88) it is suggested that the contemplation during life-time of "the sun in the rock" was part of the initiation (see n. 79). In exactly the same way Zarathustra speaks of "the most blissful union with Aša" as something to be attained during life-time,¹⁵⁸ that is, he prays to become an *ašavan-* in this life already.

It would also be possible to demonstrate the existence of an old tradition of mystical contemplation from the technical terms (such as *cit-* and its derivatives) which Indians and Iranians have in common. It is hoped, however, that the preceding remarks are sufficient for proving that, when Zarathustra professes that he will speak of "the bliss of Aša which manifests itself together with the lights" he is using the traditional terminology of Aryan mysticism. However, there is this characteristic difference between the *Rigveda* and the *Avesta* that the former lays more stress on the wonder of the sun in the rock, while the latter emphasizes the contemplation of Aša. It is significant that in the *Veda* there does not occur a word **rtadṛś-* "seeing the *Ṛta*" by the side of *svardṛś-* "sun-seer", but that only *rtacti-*, *rtajñā-* "knowing the *Ṛta*" are found. The Vedic poet tells us that there is a golden swing (the sun) in Varuṇa's palace¹⁵⁹ but he was apparently

¹⁵⁴ XPh 55 *utā mrta rtāvā bavatiy*.

¹⁵⁵ Y.41.6 *yā taṭ upā.jamyāmā tavacā sarəm ašaḥ yācā vīspāi yavē*.

¹⁵⁶ E.g., IJ, IV, p. 185 f.

¹⁵⁷ VII.88.4 *ṛṣiṇ cakāra svāpā mähobhiḥ*. Cf. Lüders, *Varuṇa*, p. 321.

¹⁵⁸ See above, note 42. B. Geiger's conclusion that 49.8 refers to "die Vereinigung mit dem göttlichen Aša im Paradiese" (*Die Aməša Spəntas*, p. 197 n.) is, as far as I can see, not supported by the context, nor by 41.6, where the *ašavans* pray for the union with Aša "for this life and for the spiritual existence" (cf. 35.8 and see Baunack, *Studien auf dem Gebiete des Griechischen und der arischen Sprachen*, I/2, 1888, p. 399 f.).

¹⁵⁹ AS. VII.83.1 *apsū te rājan varuṇa gṛhō hiraṇyāyo mitāḥ* (like the *gārta-*, RS. V.62.7 and 8), RS. VII.87.5 *gṛtso rājā vāruṇaś cakra etām divi preñkhān hiraṇyāyaṁ śubhē kām*, 88.3 *prā preñkhā īñkhayāvahai śubhē kām*, where the sun must be meant (Lüders, *Varuṇa*

unable to visualize such an abstract concept as the Cosmic Order. Only the sun as its "pure manifestation"¹⁶⁰ could serve this purpose. In marked contrast with the Vedic poets Zarathustra prays "Then indeed, *show* me Aša, which, verily, I invoke".¹⁶¹ This may be compared with Y. 60.12 "O best Aša, O most beautiful Aša, we will *see* thee, may we reach thee, we will be entirely thy companions"¹⁶² and perhaps also with 28.5a, if this may be translated as "O Aša, when shall I *see* thee?".¹⁶³ The words "intimate of Aša which is accompanied by the sun"¹⁶⁴ do not mean, therefore, that the sun was here a manifestation of Aša in the same way as in the Veda.

Despite this different emphasis, Zarathustra no doubt considered himself an "initiate" (*vidvah-*, *vidu-*, *ašavan-*),¹⁶⁵ like Vasiṣṭha, and the Gathas show that he maintains with his God a spiritual intercourse of the same kind as Vasiṣṭha¹⁶⁶ with Varuṇa. This parallelism has not escaped Zimmer, who characterized Vasiṣṭha as "a potential Zarathustra of his race".¹⁶⁷

However, the way in which the Vedic seer reacted to his personal experience was different from Zarathustra's. If a general statement may be hazarded on the basis of a single Vedic hymn, it would seem that the Vasiṣṭha of RS. VII. 88 was not concerned with anything else beyond the contemplative life and, in so doing, he conformed to the general cultural pattern of Vedic India. Zarathustra, on the other hand, became a prophet who tried to convert others to the life of "initiates". The prophetic trait which he introduced into what must essentially have been a mystery

p. 321). The use of *dršáye* in VII.88.2 *vápur dršáye* is significant in connexion with *svar-dṛś-* (see note 79).

¹⁶⁰ VI.51.1 *ṛtásya śúci darśatām ánikam*.

¹⁶¹ Y.43.10a *aṣ tū mōi dāiš ašəm hyaṣ mā zaozomī*; cf. Vyt. 42 *aēšqm ratuš zaraθuštra ašahe daēsayāṭ* (*K₄ daisayaṭ*) *pantqm*. For lexical traces of "sun-seeing" in Iran see the notes 79 and 124.

¹⁶² *aša vahišta, aša sraēšta, darəsāma θwā, pairi θwā jamyāma, haməm θwā haxma*. Cf. Baunack, *Studien*, p. 400, Bartholomae, *Altiran. Wörterb.*, col. 1739, Geiger, *Die Aməša Spəntas*, p. 187 n., Bailey, *Zoroastrian Problems in the ninth-century Books*, p. 11 n. 4.

¹⁶³ Lentz, *Yasna* 28, p. 23 f., takes *ašā* as an instrumental.

¹⁶⁴ Y.32.2b *ašā huš.haxā xəšnvatā*.

¹⁶⁵ As for Y.43, see however Humbach, *Die Gathas*, II, p. 48.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. also the dialogue between the Atharvan of AS. V.11 and Varuṇa, discussed by N. J. Shende, *BDCRI*, IX (1949), p. 284 f., and Renou, *Festgabe für Herman Lommel*, p. 126 f.

¹⁶⁷ Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben* (1879), p. 412: "weniger geistiger Grössen, unter denen z.B. ein Vasiṣṭha das Zeug hatte ein Zarathustra seines Volkes zu werden".

religion,¹⁶⁸ of the same kind as the Varuṇa cult in India, manifests itself in his efforts to found a "Civitas Dei" of *ašavans* on earth. Still, the traces of mystic contemplation that must have been characteristic of the older Ahura Mazdā religion, remain noticeable in Zarathustra's preaching.

There are, indeed, other aspects in Zarathustra's religion than the somewhat rationalistic philosophy and the ethical appeal to the will of each individual which have been over-emphasized in later theology. It is hoped that the preceding pages, devoted to the elucidation of the Old Aryan background of the phraseology of a single line from his Songs, have shown that there is some reason for a revaluation of the original character of Zarathustra's preaching.

This does not necessarily mean that Zarathustra's place in the evolution of Iranian religion was of minor interest. Although Ahura Mazdā must have been worshipped in Iran long before Zarathustra made his appearance, the latter's strong personality has left a lasting mark on the older religion. It was, however, not the object of this study to stress what was novel and original in the prophet's reform but rather to show, in the light of a single passage, to what extent the mystical background of the older religion had left its traces in Zarathustra's mind.

The ancient Aryan belief that *Ṛtá* resides in the realm of the dead still survives in the doctrine of the Younger Avesta that the souls of the deceased dwell in the "sun-possessing" abode of *Aša* (*Y.* 16.7), which abode must originally have been identical with the Aryan concept of the "sun-possessing" rock of the nether world (see p. 118). Therefore, the "most blissful union with *Aša*", in which Zarathustra and his initiates (*ašavan*-) experienced the "bliss of *Aša*", must have comprised a contemplation of *Aša*, as a mystery, hidden like the *ápihitam ṛtám* of the *Rigveda*. It has been argued that this contemplation and the accompanying mental "distinction" (*vīciθa*-) were prerequisites for the choice of *Aša*, as prefigured in *Y.* 30.5.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ Cf. Molé, *RHR*, 157 (1960), p. 181, *Numen*, 8 (1961), p. 63. With respect to my remark on the reinterpretation of the word *ašavan*- by Zarathustra it should be noted that I recently found the same observation in an earlier article by J. H. Kramers, *Jaarboek Ex Oriente Lux*, 6 (1939), p. 227, *Godsdiensten der Wereld*, I, p. 402. Any mystical trait in Zarathustra's preaching is mostly denied, cf., e.g., von Wesendonk, *Weltbild der Iranier*, p. 69.

¹⁶⁹ See: *X. Internationaler Kongress für Religionsgeschichte* (Marburg, 1961), p. 141 f.

5. COSMOGONY AND CONCEPTION : A QUERY

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

1. The immense importance of Cosmogony in many so-called primitive religions is too well known to need a lengthy argument. Although the cosmogonic myth in its essence constitutes a "sacred history," which describes the beginnings of the world, the role which this primordial stage plays in man's religious conception of his world differs widely. Mircea Eliade in his study "Cosmogonic Myth and 'Sacred History'"¹ states that in most mythologies this primordial stage of the world ends at a certain moment, and that the supernatural beings, after having shaped the cosmos, abandon the earth and disappear: "We can also say that any mythology that is still accessible in an appropriate form contains not only a beginning but also an end, determined by the last manifestation of the supernatural beings, the cultural heroes or the ancestors" (p. 174). He stresses the importance of "the myth of the estrangement of the creator, and his progressive transformation in a *deus otiosus*." Man focuses his attention more and more upon those primordial creative events "which are of consequence for human life. In other words, the coherent series of events which constitute the *sacred history* is incessantly remembered and extolled, while the previous stage, everything which existed *before* that sacred history—first and above all, the majestic and solitary presence of the

¹ *Religious Studies* 2 (1967):117-83.

creator God—fades away. If the High God is still remembered he is known to have created the world and man, but this is almost all. Such a Supreme God seems to have ended his role by achieving the work of creation" (p. 178).

Eliade's general sketch may hold good for most religions, but in some recent descriptions of Indonesian religions the High God occurs in a role which can hardly be called that of a *deus otiosus*. One of those primitive religions in which the beginnings of the cosmos still play a considerable part is that of the Ngaju Dayaks, the main outlines of which are briefly sketched by Eliade. It is true, Schärer in his admirable description of the religion² warns us, that "the Creation Myth does not give an account of the creation, but tells us how the total community is ordered, and how the whole cosmos and all its phenomena are related to the community and its different groups. It explains the social structures of the tribe, shows the functions of the various groups, and is the basis of the system of cosmic classification" (p. 158).

Although in this cosmogony different stages can be distinguished in the complicated process of creation, the following fundamental pattern seems to emerge from the picture given by Schärer: The contrast between the undivided unity that preceded the creation of the cosmos—the time "when everything was still in the mouth of the coiled Watersnake" (the primeval waters)—and the creation which is represented as the development, in different stages, of a dual organization of the cosmos. A common trait of these stages, however, is that in all of them the opposition between Upperworld and Underworld, created as a totality, is the central motif.

When viewed from this angle, it does not make a great difference whether we are concerned with the two mountains which first arose from the waters and which, clashing together, produced seven different things, or with the supreme deities whose seats these mountains were, and who were in a way identical with them, namely, the god Mahatala, representing the Upperworld, and the goddess Jata, who stands for the Underworld. Jata creates the earth and the hills, Mahatala the Tree of Life, and together they create the first human beings. More obscure is the relation between Mahatala and his sister or wife, Putir Selong Langit, who were identified with the male and the female hornbill, respectively. As a result of the extraordinary fight between these two birds the

² H. Schärer, *Ngaju Religion, the Conception of God among a South Borneo People* (The Hague, 1963). (Translation of "Die Gottesidee der Ngadju Dajak in Süd-Borneo" [Ph.D thesis, Leiden University, 1946].)

Tree of Life is destroyed, but at the same time many things and persons, such as rivers, lakes, the ancestor of Haramaung Batolang Buno, and the witches come into being. Schärer (p. 31) considers the possibility (although admitting that this is risky) that Mahatata's wife or sister may be equated with Jata, the divine maiden who has emerged from the primeval waters and is the representative par excellence of the Underworld. It might be objected that the contrast between Upper- and Underworld is primarily symbolized; not by the two hornbills but by the hornbill and the watersnake (p. 18). Anyway, the fact should be stressed that Schärer rejects the traditional assumption among European students of this religion that Mahatata has long become a *deus otiosus*. On the contrary, Mahatata and Jata "still occupy a decisive place in worship" and "stand at the centre of religious life and thought" (p. 6). It may be added that essentially the same conclusion is found in Tobing's study of the religion of the Toba-Batak (see n. 59 below). Criticizing K. Th. Preuss, he states that "as a totality, the High God is not only a *deus otiosus*, but also a dynamic God" (Tobing, pp. 25 ff.). Whatever interpretation may be proposed for the fight between the male and the female hornbill (which rather seems to be a dichotomy of a subordinate character), it is evident that the fundamental contrast is between the Hornbill and the Watersnake, who together form the unity of the world as *Tambon haruei Bungai* "the Watersnake which is also the Hornbill" (Schärer, pp. 19, 23, 155).

Eliade rightly stresses the preeminent importance of this notion of totality, and of the godhead's manifestations as such (p. 176). In this connection it may be worthwhile to study in more detail some aspects of the Vedic cosmogonic myth. Such a study, however, involves some methodological problems which need some previous clarification.

2. It is a well-known fact that our oldest source for Vedic mythology is the *Rig-Veda*. It cannot reasonably be doubted that this text is separated from the other Vedic texts by a rather wide chronological distance. At the time when the other texts came into existence the *Rig-Veda* must already have been considered the canonical text par excellence of Vedic religion.³ It is not surprising, therefore, that many descriptions of Vedic mythology, like Macdonell's excellent work, are almost exclusively based on the data of this collection of 1,028 hymns. No objection can be

³ H. Oldenberg, *Die Hymnen des Rigveda, I, Metrische und textgeschichtliche Prolegomena* (Berlin, 1888).

raised to such a procedure if the author clearly states he is dealing with nothing but "the religion of the *Rig Veda*" (as is the title of a work by H. D. Griswold). Things are different, however, when a work pretends to describe Vedic mythology in its totality. In that case the procedure may imply some silent presuppositions which deserve a closer inspection. It would seem that some of the nineteenth-century scholars were more aware of the problems involved than those modern authorities whose approach is a more strictly philological one. Auguste Barth, in the preface to *The Religions of India* (3d ed., 1891, pp. xiii-xv), after stressing that the character of the Rigvedic style "is such as reminds one more frequently of the phraseology in use among certain small groups of initiated than the poetic language of a large community," sums up his general opinion in the words "it is evident that a literature such as this will only embrace what is within the scope of a limited horizon, and will have authoritative weight only in regard to things in a more or less special reference, and that the negative conclusions especially which may be deduced from such documents must be received with not a little reservation. . . . I am therefore far from believing that the Veda has taught us everything on the ancient social and religious condition of even Aryan India, or that everything there can be accounted for by reference to it." Oldenberg held a similar view: "Es liegt aber in der Natur dieser Liederdichtung, dass sie die verschiedenen Gebiete des religiösen Wesens und des Mythenbestandes höchst ungleichmässig berührt. Alles Licht fällt ausschliesslich auf die grossen Götter, die beim Soma-opfer und im vornehmen Kult der Fürsten und Reichen voranstehen. . . . Grund genug, bei Schlüssen auf die jüngere Herkunft der im Rgveda nicht erwähnten Riten äusserste Vorsicht zu beobachten." While Macdonell confines himself to pointing to the "defective information" of these hymns, Lommel defends his completing the meager data of the *Rig-Veda* by utilizing the later *Brāhmaṇa* texts in the following words: "Der Umstand, dass sie später als der Rigveda ihre sprachliche Festlegung erfahren hat, ist wie gesagt kein hinlänglicher Grund, ihre Zeugniskraft für alte mythische und religiöse Anschauungen herabzusetzen. Man weiss ja, dass das Ritual oft sehr zäh am Alten festhält; und die Ritualtexte haben vielfach Anteil an der Überlieferungstreue der rituellen Handlungen. Es hat zwar Fortbildung und Entwicklung stattgefunden; Jüngerer ist hinzugetreten, es ist aber vielfach möglich und manchmal gar nicht schwer, Ursprüngliches und Sekundäres zu unterscheiden. Vielfach herrscht Übereinstimmung mit dem Rigveda;

was von diesem abweicht, muss durchaus nicht etwas Verkehrtes sein, sondern kann oftmals die Angaben des Rigveda in bedeutender Weise ergänzen."⁴

By quoting these scholars I do not mean to say that the terms in which they tried to determine the character of the *Rig-Veda* can still be accepted without any modification. On the contrary, I think that the particular character of the majority of the Rigvedic hymns, and especially the remarkable predominance of the Indra-Vṛtra myth that struck the earlier students of Vedic mythology, is primarily due to the fact that the nucleus of the *Rig-Veda*, the so-called family books (II-VII), was a collection of hymns that had been composed for the celebration of the New Year ceremony.⁵ However that may be, the fundamental point at issue is that one cannot easily use the data of the Rigvedic hymns without asking himself what exactly the nature of this poetry was.

3. A single instance may illustrate the methodological dilemma that faces every student of Rigvedic mythology. Only once do we find in this text the statement that Varuṇa "clasps the night in his arms" (VIII.41.3). Although in later Vedic texts the night is constantly identified with Varuṇa, Renou denied any connection of Varuṇa with the night except for this single passage.⁶ He accordingly assumed, going exclusively by what the texts say, that the association of Varuṇa and night is the result of a later development and does not belong to the earlier stage of Vedic religion as found in the *Rig-Veda*. It is characteristic that the real problem that is obviously at the bottom of this approach has never been stated explicitly. This is the question as to how such equations as "Varuṇa is the night," which occur everywhere in the *Brāhmaṇas*, should be interpreted. It is clear that on the basis of the naïve realism which characterized the attitude of the older generation of philologists and which resulted in such disputes as "is Varuṇa the water or the earth?" the equations of the *Brāhmaṇas* could hardly be taken seriously. This was the more difficult because all kinds of such equations were found to occur side by side. Nevertheless the consistency with which they occur in the speculations of the *Brāhmaṇas* should have warned these scholars against passing too lightly over them. What these texts actually give is not, indeed,

⁴ Idem, *Die Religion des Veda*, 3d and 4th ed. (Stuttgart/Berlin, 1923), pp. 8, 10; A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology* (Strassburg, 1897), p. 4; H. Lommel, *Symbolon, Jahrbuch für Symbolforschung*, ed. Julius Schwabe (Basel/Stuttgart, 1964), 4:156.

⁵ See *Indo-Iranian Journal* 4 (1960):221, 269; 5 (1961):169-83 (hereafter *IJ*).

⁶ *Festgabe für Herman Lommel* (see also *Paideuma* 7, nos. 4-6 [1960]), p. 124. But see also Renou, *Études védiques et pāṇinienes* 15 (1966):6; and Abel Bergaigne, *Religion védique* (Paris, 1883), 3:117.

definitions which express a direct identity of two given entities, but equations in terms of a cosmic classificatory system. Within this framework it is equally possible to say that the Asuras are the night and the Devas the day,⁷ or that one of the Asuras (Varuṇa) is the night, and another (Mitra) is the day. Since it cannot be contested that the Rigvedic mythology was already based upon such a system of contrasting entities, the question that has to be answered in every individual case is whether an opposition not found in the *Rig-Veda* but only in more recent texts (such as the *Brāhmaṇas*) is the result of a later systematization of theologians, or rather part of the oldest priestly theory about the Universe. In the latter case the real problem is whether the *Rig-Veda* is reticent about it.⁸ The possibility that a taboo may have compelled the Rigvedic poets not to mention certain inauspicious aspects of a god like Varuṇa has been considered by several scholars, such as Sylvain Lévi and Hillebrandt.⁹

Renou, on the other hand, sticks strictly to the philological facts attested, and if certain facts are not mentioned in the *Rig-Veda* he apparently feels compelled to conclude that they were unknown, not only among the Rigvedic priests but in the entire corpus of religious notions at that time. Although it must be admitted that from a strictly philological point of view this is a sound method, the difficulty is that we are not here concerned with purely philological data alone but with a coherent system of religious notions. It might be argued that Renou's approach is, therefore, less cautious than that of Barth, Oldenberg, or Hillebrandt. However, this does not decide the problem as to whether in this specific case the isolated reference to the night reflects a general mythological concept about which the Rigvedic poets were purposely reticent, or if this is the first indication of a later development of the views held about the god Varuṇa. Only a structural approach can help us to understand the function of this god in the total system of mythological concepts.

A second point that illustrates the methodological dilemma is the place where Rta, the Cosmic Order, was considered to reside. From *Rksamhitā* (hereafter *RS.*) V.62.1, where Varuṇa and Mitra are addressed in the words: "In accordance with [?] Rta your fixed Rta is hidden where they unharness the horses of the sun,"

⁷ For references, see *IJJ* 8 (1964):115.

⁸ See *ibid.*, 3 (1959):211; 5 (1961):53, 57.

⁹ Cf. Sylvain Lévi, *La doctrine du sacrifice dans les brāhmaṇas* (1898), pp. 167 ff.; Alfred Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie*, 2d ed. (Breslau, 1929), 2:127; F. B. J. Kuiper, *IJJ* 5 (1961):53.

it has been inferred that the *Ṛta* was conceived of as hidden in Varuṇa's domain, the western ocean where the sun sets.¹⁰ From the oldest texts onward where mention is made of the classificatory system, Varuṇa is (apart from a very few isolated exceptions) consistently associated with the western quarter, and references to this association are still found in many passages of the *Mahābhārata* and later texts. In view of the central role which the classificatory system plays in the Vedic conception of the world, it is entirely inconceivable that it could have been invented by later priests. The absence of clear references to it in the *Rig-Veda* must, therefore, be attributed to the specific character of the Rigvedic hymns.

On the other hand, the conclusion that *Ṛta* was thought of as hidden in the western ocean had to be based on this single passage of the *Rig-Veda*. This case is different from that quoted above insofar as the close connection between Varuṇa and the Cosmic Order is so emphatically stressed by the Rigvedic poets as not to be open to reasonable doubt. Nor is it questionable that Varuṇa was closely related to the ocean. The point at issue is, whether "the seat of *Ṛta*" so frequently referred to by the poets was in the western ocean (that is, in the underworld) or rather, as is the almost unanimous opinion, in heaven. There is an interesting passage in the *Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa*, where each of the quarters bestows its own emblems on the Sun. Here we read (II.25.13-14): "'Do thou set in me,' said the western quarter and gave him *Ṛta and the night*." The connection of the night with the western quarter is not surprising: in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* X.6.4.1, the birthplace of the night is said to be in the western sea, where the sun sets. As we saw above, *Ṛta* is said to reside in the same place in *ṚS.* V.62.1. Since it cannot reasonably be argued that the author of the passage in the *Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa* had based his association of *Ṛta* and night with the western quarter upon these two isolated passages, his words have to be accepted as an independent piece of evidence. As such it testifies to the existence of a system of cosmic notions that was common to both the oldest and the later texts of Vedic tradition. Lüders's idea of *Ṛta* residing in a celestial ocean (*Varuṇa* 2:594) will therefore have to

¹⁰ See, e.g., *IJJ* 3 (1959):215; 8 (1964):107 (to the references given there in n. 55, should be added Bergaigne, 3:117; Hillebrandt, *Lieder des Ṛgveda* [Göttingen/Leipzig, 1913], p. 80, n. 2; Geldner, *Religionsgeschichtliches Lesebuch*, ed. A. Bertholet, 2d ed., Heft 9 [Tübingen, 1928], p. 111; Renou, *Etudes védiques* 5 [1959]:78; 7 [1960]:40, 129).

be replaced by that of the western ocean and the subterranean waters as its residence, a notion which still survives in the epics where Varuṇa's residence is said to be in the western ocean.¹¹ Further indirect confirmation can be found in the belief that the Asuras secretly kept the moisture of the anthills (*Atharva-Veda Samhitā* II.3.3), which implies a reference to the subterranean water. In post-Vedic texts a digger of pools is said to attain Varuṇa's world, and Varuṇa himself is said to be king of the waters "uniquement lorsqu'il s'agit de rites de consécration des puits, mares et réservoirs."¹²

This digression was unavoidable because the methodological problem of how to evaluate the Rigvedic evidence in its relation to the later Vedic literature is one of the moot points of Vedic mythological studies. A strictly philological approach, such as that of Renou, results in an evolutionistic view which ascribes all notions not directly expressed in the *Rig-Veda* to a later development. In the light of the preceding considerations, however, it would seem a justifiable procedure to make—with due reserve—an attempt to reconstruct the Vedic cosmogonic myth by making use both of the Rigvedic evidence and of that of the later Vedic texts, such as the *Brāhmaṇas*; in other words, by supplementing the very deficient data of the oldest text by those of later sources, which apparently are still rooted in essentially the same system of mythological conceptions.

THE "FIRST CREATION"

4. Owing to a neglect of the data found in more recent texts, the handbooks on Vedic mythology omit to state that we can distinguish two main stages in the process of creation. Not before the last few decades have scholars come to recognize the fact that the central myth of the *Rig-Veda*, the fight of Indra with the dragon (*vr̥trá/Vr̥trá*), is a creation myth.¹³ This, however, is only the second stage of the cosmogony. The concentration of the Rigvedic poets on this part of the cosmogony exclusively is probably due to

¹¹ E. W. Hopkins, *Epic Mythology* (Strassburg, 1915), p. 26. (*Varuṇa*, by Lüders, was published in Göttingen, 1959.)

¹² *Viṣṇusmṛti*, 41.2 (cf. 1); M.-Th. de Mallmann, *Les enseignements iconographiques de l'Agni-Purāṇa* (Paris, 1963), p. 132.

¹³ For references, see *IJ* 4 (1960):218, n. 6. In some respects, L. Buschardt, *Vr̥tra, Det rituelle Dæmondrab i den Vediske Somakult*, Det Kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, Historisk-filologiske Meddelelser, vol. 30, no. 3 (Copenhagen, 1945) should also be mentioned here.

the circumstance that this myth was of preeminent importance for social life, since the socioreligious ceremonies of the New Year festival were based on it.

In contradistinction from this myth of the Vṛtra slaying, that of the beginning of this world had no direct relevance for the ritual. Still, the frequent references to it in the ritual texts, where it occurs in the fixed formula "Water, forsooth, was all this in the beginning," shows that this notion formed an essential part of the speculations on the creation of the world. Although every school had its own slightly divergent variant of this formula, their wording is on the whole identical, which shows this concept to belong to the oldest stock of Yajurvedic mythical tradition. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (VI.8.2.3) a mantra referring to divine "wives" is explained, with an etymological pun, in the words: "the wives (*jānayaḥ*) verily, are the waters, for from these waters this universe is born (*jāyate*)." The equation of the waters (denoted by the feminine plural word *āpaḥ*) to wives of a god is also found in the *Rig-Veda*. Clear references to the primeval waters, however, are only found in the last and most recent book of the *Rig-Veda* in the so-called philosophical hymns. For example, see the references to the "indiscriminate flood" (X.129.3), the lofty waters which conceived the Universe as their germ and generated the Fire god (X.121.7). Elsewhere, the waters are invoked as mothers (X.17.10, I.23.16). See especially VI.50.7, "For you are the most motherly physicians, mothers (*jānitṛī*) of all that stands and goes." In the hymn dedicated to the cosmic architect, Viśvakarman, the poet asks (X.82.5): "What then was that, beyond Heaven and Earth, beyond Devas and Asuras [that is, prior to the dualistic order of this world], which the waters conceived as their first embryo, in which all gods saw each other?" Similar passages are found in the *Atharva-Veda* (e.g., IV.2.6 and 8; XII.1.8). In view of the fact that the primeval waters apparently belong to the old inheritance of notions of the *Yajur-Veda*, and that similar notions are found in cosmogonies all over the world, it is hardly credible that the Vedic myth of the origin of the world from the waters is the product of late Vedic poets as Lüders assumes in *Varuṇa* (p. 121).

These primeval waters are accepted as a given fact about whose origin it would be useless to speculate. At most, the Vedic thinkers may have asked themselves the question which the poet of R.S. X.129.6 puts about the origin of the cosmos: "Who knows whence it has come into existence?" According to the *Brāhmaṇas*, these waters are the "fundament" (*pratiṣṭhā*) of "these worlds" or of

the earth.¹⁴ On the other hand, the earth is thought of as a receptacle (*pātram*) which encloses the subterranean waters.¹⁵

The emergence of the earth in these waters is the first stage of the cosmogony, and different theories existed about the way in which the earth came into being. One of them was that the earth was the result of a process of coagulation, an idea also found in Semitic mythology.¹⁶ This can be compared with *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* III.360, line 11, *Brhad-Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* I.2.2., and *Aitareya Upaniṣad* I.3.¹⁷ The best-known variant of this theory is the "Churning of the Ocean," which may be called a Creation myth insofar as the coagulation is here the result of the joined efforts of the Devas and the Asuras. It is not, however, found in this explicit form in texts anterior to the *Mahābhārata*. Whether the reference in the *Rig-Veda* to the gods dancing in the sea while holding each others' hands (X.72.6) has any historical connection with the myth of the primeval waters is notoriously a moot point.¹⁸

The second idea, that of the mundane egg,¹⁹ is either connected with that of a coagulation of the waters or with that of a Creator. The first variant is met with in the version of the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* (III.360, line 7), according to which there were originally only the waters, the billows of which collided with each other. As a result of this, a golden egg came into existence and lay there for a hundred years of the gods. In a different version, that of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XI.1.6.1-2), a golden egg arose from the heat produced by the waters as they wanted to propagate themselves. That egg floated about for a year and in that time a man, Prajāpati, the god of the primordial undivided world, came into being. He then broke the egg open but it had no foundation, and he floated about on that egg for another year after which

¹⁴ Cf. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* VI.7.17, VI.8.2.2, VII.4.1.8; *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* III.6.4; *Aitareya Upaniṣad* I.2.

¹⁵ See *Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā* I.4.10 (p. 59, line 5) *iyām vā etāsām pātram, anāyai vāi nā āgrahitū, Kāthaka Samhitā* XXXII.7 (p. 26, line 15).

¹⁶ Cf. A. J. Wensinck, *The Ideas of the Western Semites concerning the Navel of the Earth*, in *Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen te Amsterdam, Afdeeling Letterkunde*, n.s., 17, no. 1 (Amsterdam, 1916): 5: "coagulated billows of Tehom." The same idea occurs in the Orphic cosmogony: "Húdōr ēn ex arkhēs kai húlē, ex hēs epágē hē gē" (cf. B. H. Stricker, *De Geboorte van Horus* [Leiden, 1968], 2:142, and also A. H. Krappe, *La genèse des mythes* [Paris, 1938], p. 256).

¹⁷ See also *mūrtātaram, prāmūrchat* (*Śat. Br.* X.5.3.3). Van Buitenen's divergent interpretation of the *Brh. Ār. Up.* passage in *JAOS* 77 (1957):91 does not seem preferable.

¹⁸ See, e.g., Geldner, *Festgruss Roth* (1893), p. 192; Kuiper, *Turner Jubilee Volume I* (1958), p. 360, n. 21.

¹⁹ H. Lommel, "Der Welt-ai-Mythos im Rig-Veda," in *Mélanges Bally* (Geneva, 1939), pp. 214-20.

he created the earth, the atmosphere, and the sky. Other versions, however, resemble that of the *Jaiminiya Brahmana* in that they do not introduce a Creator or demiurgic figure. Thus the *Jaiminiya Upanisad Brahmana* (I.56.1) begins with the formula that is characteristic of the *Jaiminiyas*, namely, "Water was this in the beginning, a great flood" but then continues: "that impregnated [as] a wave [another] wave. Thence arose two golden cups [cavities, *kukṣi*]." The idea is closely related to that of the *Jaiminiya Brahmana*, where the waves collided and thus became a golden egg (see above). The *Chandogya Upanisad* (III.19.1) shows both in its ideas and its terminology, some relationship to the *Jaiminiya* version, but here the mythological concept of the waters is replaced by the more philosophical notion of the "non-being," and the idea of the egg merges into that of an embryo:²⁰ from the non-being arose the being, this developed into an egg, which lay a full year before splitting open. It then became two eggshells, one of silver, which became the Earth, the other a golden one, which became the Heaven. After that, however, there follows a more specified description, which refers to veins, chthon, and amnion. The concept of the golden egg survives in later literature, and according to some versions god Brahma was born from it.²¹

There is no reason to consider these versions, although they are only found in later texts, to be due to secondary developments. Elements of the concept of the golden egg can be found in the *Rig-Veda*. On one hand there is a rare reference to the myth of a golden embryo (*Hvanyagvaha*) that "arose in the beginning" (X.121.1), which embryo is apparently identical with the "embryo of the Waters" mentioned in stanza 7 of the same hymn and in X.82.6. Much, however, remains unclear with regard to this mythological figure, who "was born as the only Lord of all that exists" and supports Heaven and Earth. On the other hand, the notion of an egg is found in the myth of World Mother Aditi, who gave birth to seven gods and, as the eighth, to a "mortal egg" (*Martanda*).²²

The third theory, finally, does not account for the origin of the earth but simply relates that a cosmogonic boar brought some mud upward from the bottom of the Waters, which then became the

²⁰ See P. Deussen, *Sechzig Upanishaden*, 3d ed. (Leipzig, 1921), p. 116.
²¹ See *Manu* I.9; *Mahabharata* XII.299.3 (crit. ed.); *Harivamsa* I.35 ff.; Minard, *Trois énigmes* (Paris, 1961), 2:287, 329 ff.; Krappe, pp. 255 ff.; and for the world-egg in Orphic literature, Jane Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, 2d ed. (Cambridge, 1908), pp. 625 ff.
²² See Karl Hoffmann, *Münchener Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft* II (1957): 85-103.

beginning of the Earth. Originally it was as small as the boar's snout, but soon, while still floating on the surface of the Waters, it began to grow. This version of the cosmogony is found in all the schools of the *Yajur-Veda*.²³ It is mentioned in explanation of the fact that whoever piles a sacrificial fire should lay some earth dug up by a boar (*vārāhavihatam*) under it. In most versions it is said that the Creator god, Prajāpati, while roaming over the Waters in the shape of the Wind, sees the Earth and dives into the Waters in the shape of a boar. As such he brings the first beginning of the earth to the surface. In one of the oldest texts (*Maitr. Samh.*), however, this identification of the cosmogonic boar with Prajāpati is lacking. It should be noted that this boar bears no name. He is simply the *ādivarāha* "primordial boar" (as Kālidāsa calls him in *Raghuvamśa* 13.8). Only once, in one of the most recent Vedic texts, and in one of the last parts of it, is he given the name "Emūṣa," but this is obviously due to the characteristic tendency of this text to harmonize different and even contradictory versions of myths. The fact is only mentioned because the incidental occurrence of this name, which belongs to an entirely different, non-Aryan, myth, has given rise to some misinterpretations.²⁴ In contradistinction from the Emuṣa myth, however, the cosmogonic boar, who seems to be identical with the "hog" (*sūkarā*) of the *Atharva-Veda*,²⁵ may even be historically identical with the *varāza* of the *Avesta*, and thus have its origin in the common Indo-Iranian mythology (see Charpentier).

There seems, also, to have existed a specifically Indian myth in

²³ *Maitr. Samh.* I.6.3; *Kāth. Samh.* VIII.2; *Kapishthala-Kaṭha Samh.* [VI.7; *Taitt. Samh.* VII.1.5.1. Cf. *Taitt. Brāhm.* I.2.1.3 (see also *Āpastamba Śrauta Sūtra* V.1.7) with commentary; and *Taitt. Āraṇyaka* X.1.8.

²⁴ Cf. *Sat. Br.* XIV.1.2.11. See Kuiper, *Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen*, n.s., 13, no. 7 (Amsterdam, 1950): 18. This view was criticized by J. Gonda in *Aspects of Early Viṣṇuism* (Utrecht, 1954), pp. 139 ff. (see also Eliade, *Revue de l'histoire des religions* [1961], p. 198), but he disregarded the fact that in all the older Yajurvedic texts the name *Emūṣa* is exclusively given to the boar which occurs in a non-Aryan myth (whose central motif was the boiled rice, *odanā!*), and which had a clearly demoniacal *Vṛtra* character (see also Benveniste in E. Benveniste-L. Renou, *Vṛtra et Vṛthagna* [Paris, 1934], p. 195). It is characteristic that this myth, as a parallel of the *Vṛtra* myth, is associated not with the World-Father Prajāpati but with Indra. Both on functional and on purely philological grounds an identification of the two mythological boars (on which most older discussions were based, e.g., Charpentier, "Kleine Beiträge zur indoiranischen Mythologie," *Universitets Årsskrift* [Uppsala, 1911], pt. 2, p. 58, and which is still maintained by Gonda and Eliade) would seem impossible.

²⁵ *IL* 27.2 (see also V.14.1). See *IJJ* 4 (1960): 251 ff.; Bloomfield, *SBE* 42 (1897): 306, who denied the mythical character of the allusions in these verses, seems to have underrated the religious importance of references to the cosmogony. The combination of *suparnā* and *sūkarā* in one stanza and the reference to the latter's snout (*sūkarās tvā kṣhanan naśā*) may be considered significant.

which the lotus was the symbol of the cosmos (earth and sun) rising from the primeval waters. An element of this myth, which the Aryans must have taken over from the autochthonous population, is the lotus leaf, which is sometimes introduced as a mere motif into the older cosmogonical myth and sometimes becomes an intrinsic part of it. The first version reads as follows: "Waters were the world at first, the moving ocean; Prajāpati, becoming wind, rocked about on a lotus leaf; he could find no support; he saw that nest of the waters, on it he piled the fire, that became this (earth), then indeed did he find support." What must have been meant by the expression "nest of the waters" appears from those passages where the moist lairs (*ārdrā yónayah*) of the Fire god are contrasted with those which "have a nest" (*kulāyīnīh*).²⁶ The word "nest," accordingly, seems to refer to a more solid state of aggregation (in the midst of the waters?).

This passage has here been quoted in full²⁷ not so much because of the interesting initial manifestation of the Creator god as the Wind, as because it describes so characteristically the lack of "support" (*pratiṣṭhā*), of a fixed point in this primary stage of the cosmogony. As for the second, contaminated, version, it can here be disregarded as it occurs only in a single text which dates from the end of the Brāhmaṇa tradition and, being composite in more than one respect,²⁸ is of no interest for our purpose.

From the preceding passages it may be concluded that the first stage of the cosmogony was an undivided unity, a *rudis indigestaque moles*, in which the *instabilis tellus* deserves particular notice. In some ritual speculations, it is true, Prajāpati, the Father of the Universe, finds at last a *pratiṣṭhā*, a support, by piling the sacrificial fire on the "nest of the waters."²⁹ The most prominent characteristic of this primordial world remains, nevertheless, that the mun-

²⁶ Cf. *Maitr. Samh.* II.7.15 (p. 98, line 11), III.4.7 (p. 53, line 14); *Kāth. Samh.* XXXIX.3 (p. 121, line 4).

²⁷ Translation by Keith of *Taitt. Samh.* V.6.4.2-3. The parallel texts *Kāth. Samh.* XXII.9 (p. 64, line 13) and *Kapiṣṭhala-Kaṭha Samh.* XXXV.3 (p. 179, line 15) are similar.

²⁸ In *Taitt. Brāhm.* I.1.3.5-6, Prajāpati sees a lotus leaf *standing* in the waters. He then thinks: "Verily that [earth] exists on which this [lotus leaf] can be founded." He then becomes a boar, dives for some earth on the bottom of the waters and spreads this out (*apraṭhaya*) on the lotus leaf. Hence the name *prthivī* for the earth. In this version the lotus leaf standing in the waters would seem to be a transformation of an older motif, that of the golden reed: "He who knows the golden reed standing in the sea—he verily is in secret Prajāpati" (translation by Whitney of *Atharva-Veda* X.7.41).

²⁹ *Kāth. Samh.* XXII.9 (p. 65, line 14); *Kapiṣṭhala-Kaṭha Samh.* XXXV.3 (p. 179, line 16); *Taitt. Samh.* V.6.4.2.

dane egg floats on the waters and that the main concern is where to find a fixed point, a "support."

There can be little doubt that this lack of a settling point is of essential importance in the initial stage of the cosmogony. As we shall see below, the appearance of a male figure in this primordial world is needed to create such a fixed point from which the earth can develop. As a mere parallel, just to underline the contrast between male and female in this context, the following episode may be quoted from the Creation myth of the Ngaju Dayaks (Schärer, pp. 28 ff.). As a result of an extraordinary fight between the two birds, there arise two boats, a golden and a jewel boat. At the same time a maiden and a young man come into existence. The maiden "gets into the golden boat and sets forth on the primeval waters. . . . The young man gets in the jewel boat and sets out on the primeval waters. Suddenly the two boats run together. The young man sees the maiden and his heart is seized with love for her. He wishes to marry her. She agrees to his request, but on certain conditions. They are still floating about on the primeval waters and have no place where they can settle. She longs to have such a place before she will become the young man's wife. The young man is sad. Mahatala sees his distress. He makes an island in the primeval waters. . . . On the island rises the mountain Kanganong Gandang." The interesting point is that the island is made as a result of the male and female principles meeting each other while floating on the surface of the primeval waters. In the Vedic myth the corresponding process has a more aggressive character but, as I hope to demonstrate, here, too, the appearance of a male god is the decisive factor.

THE CREATION OF THE DUAL COSMOS

5. Just as the way in which the earth rose in the primeval waters is described either as an autonomous process or as the result of an intervention by a Creator god, just so the second stage is presented in two different ways.

On the one hand we find in the *Brāhmaṇas* the fixed formula, "These two worlds were together; they separated."³⁰ Sometimes the idea occurs in a more elaborated form, as in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (I.4.1.22), where it is said that the heaven was so near to the earth that it could be touched by the hand. It is quite in line

³⁰ *Rig-Veda* and *Sāma-Veda*: *imau vai lokau sahā 'stām, tau vyaitām*; *Yajur-Veda*: *ime vai sahā 'stām, te vyaitām*.

with the system of cosmic equations that we also find a variant form of this formula, which says that formerly Day and Night were connected (*samśliṣṭa*) and indiscriminate (*avyākṛta*). (For example, see *Jaim. Br.* III.361, line 4, and compare it with *Śat. Br.* VIII.4.3.12, where the pair Day-Night is equated with Ārya-Śūdra.) Only rarely is the separation described as the result of the action of the Wind, who here again acts as the first Being and who blows earth and heaven apart.³¹ It reminds us of the well-known philosophical hymn of the *Rig-Veda* which says that in the primordial world, when there was no Day or Night, the undifferentiated One "breathed without wind" (X.129.2).

On the other hand, the separation is also described as the demiurgic act of a god, particularly of Indra. This is the version of the myth that is the central motif of the *Rig-Veda*: "Indra, after slaying the powers of resistance [*vṛtrāṇi*], pressed asunder heaven and earth by his greatness."³² The god, who "props up" (*stabh-, ut-tabh-*) the vault of the sky, thereby creates this world that is characterized by duality, by the contrast of Upperworld and Underworld, of Devas and Asuras, of Day and Night. In this connection the words of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* III.3.2.2 may be quoted: "twofold indeed is this [universe], there is no third." Only seldom is this creation attributed to other gods who are mythically related to Indra, such as Viṣṇu, the god of totality who creates the space for Indra to act,³³ or Indra's helpers, the Maruts.

Only after slaying the "powers of resistance" was Indra able to perform his demiurgic act, to release the waters and, as some texts add, the sun. This is the central mythic exploit which the Rigvedic poets never tire of celebrating. What strikes us, however, is the fact that they refer to it not only as a mythic act of the primordial time but as something that has to be reiterated again and again. The poets hope and expect that Indra will again slay these powers as he once did in *illo tempore*, and the whole society seems to join the god in his divine fight by means of chariot races, contests, and potlatchlike donations. It is curious, therefore, that seldom the question has been asked why it is exactly this single mythic feat that is so infinitely repeated in the Rigvedic hymns. Only the

³¹ *Kāth. Samh.* XIII.12 (p. 193, line 12) *ime vai sahā 'stām, te vāyur vyavāt; Taitt. Samh.* III.4.3.1.

³² *RS.* VII.23.3, cf. VI.29.5 and V.29.4, V.31.6, VI.17.7, X.89.4, X.113.4 and 5.

³³ *RS.* VII.99.2. Cf., e.g., *Kāth. Samh.* XIII.3 (p. 181, line 14) *Viṣṇur vā imāni lokān udajayat, sa ebhya lokebhya 'surān prānudata*. For Viṣṇu's role, see *Indological Studies in Honor of W. Norman Brown* (1962), pp. 137-51. For the Maruts, see *RS.* VIII.94.11.

theory that the *Rig-Veda* in its essence is a textbook for the ceremonies of the New Year festival would seem to provide a satisfactory explanation for the remarkably one-sided character of these hymns.³⁴

Although the hymns often refer to the "powers of resistance" in general, these are impersonated in the mythic figure of the dragon (*āhi*), who is this power to such an extent that the neuter word *vr̥trá* tends to become his proper name.³⁵ This dragon is said to lie on a mountain (*párvata*, *párvata giri*, *ádri*, *giri*). The fact should be stressed (against Hillebrandt³⁶) that in the context of this myth the poets (with two exceptions) always refer to a single mountain.³⁷ Indra wins the salutary goods for this world either by slaying with his *vájra* the dragon who withholds them from the gods (*devás*), or directly by piercing the mountain. Lüders (*Varuṇa* I, pp. 170 ff.), rightly stresses this situation in the following words: "So wird denn auch in den Schilderungen des *Vṛtrakampfes* von Indra immer wieder gesagt, dass er seine Angriffe gegen den Berg richtete, gerade als ob dieser der eigentliche Feind sei." He points out that the poet of *ṚS.* I.54.10 seems to conceive this mountain as a kind of stone case, which lay in the belly of the dragon (p. 172), and in a separate note on page 174 he writes: "Das himmlische Meer, in dem sich die Wasser, Soma und die Gestirne befinden, ist in einem Felsen, einem Steinbehälter, eingeschlossen. Daher kämpft Indra im *Vṛtrakampf* immer gegen den 'Berg.' Er ist der Steinverschluss der himmlischen Wasser, den *Vṛtra* verschlungen hat. Derselbe Berg ist der *Vala*, aus dem die Morgenröten befreit werden" (a similar passage occurs on p. 332).

Although Lüders's assumption of a celestial ocean is open to dispute, a critical discussion of this detail would here be out of order. The main point is that Lüders has rightly recognized the situation in the fight of Indra with the dragon, whom the poets describe as lying either on the waters (Lüders, p. 167, n. 6) or on the mountain (Lüders, pp. 170 ff.). The real character of this mountain, however, remains unclear. Hillebrandt contemplated the possibility of identifying it with the Himalaya or the Hindukush (*Vedische Mythologie*, 2:161), and Lüders did not live to elaborate

³⁴ Cf. Hillebrandt (n. 9 above), p. 182; Kuiper, *Museum* 59 (1954), col. 84; *IIIJ* 4 (1960):222, and 5 (1961-62):169 ff.

³⁵ See Benveniste-Renou (n. 24 above), pp. 95-97, 100.

³⁶ See n. 9 above, p. 234, *passim*.

³⁷ *ṚS.* I.32.2 (but a plural in 1), 51.4, 54.10, 57.6; IV.21.8; V.32.1 and 2; VI.30.5; VIII.64.5; VII.79.4; IV.17.2. Cf. also VI.24.6; I.73.6, etc. For the plural in IV.19.4, see below.

his idea of the stone case.³⁸ Neither Hillebrandt nor Lüders was inclined to take the equation of Vṛtra and mountain (*Maitr. Samh.* IV.5.1. (pp. 62, 15)) seriously.

THE PRIMORDIAL HILL

6. Some years before the publication of Lüders's life work, it had been pointed out that the mountain against which Indra directed his assaults obviously was the primordial mountain, and that his fight against the dragon describes a stage in the process of Creation when "the gods, accordingly, had not yet the disposal of the *amṛta/soma*, since this, along with all the essentials of life (such as water = *rasa*, essence of life, and the sun = the light of life and the world) was still guarded in the primordial hill by the serpent representing the nether world. The fact that Indra wins it and causes the sun to rise constitutes his great Creation act, which is repeated every morning and which leads up every year, at the time of the winter solstice, to a new crisis."³⁹ It might be objected that here the netherworld, which forms part of the dual cosmos, has been too rashly identified with the undivided primordial world.

Taken by itself, the idea that some of the Vedic mythologems may have some connection with the winter solstice was no novel one. Ludwig had been the first to explain the Rigvedic hymns to Dawn (*Uṣas*) as referring to this period of the year, and Hillebrandt had adopted his idea.⁴⁰ Although this theory has universally been rejected, it still deserves serious consideration.⁴¹ Hillebrandt took a further step in that he also associated the Vṛtra fight with the winter solstice (*Vedische Mythologie*, 2:182), but he failed to recognize the true character of the myth. Lüders on the other hand, in criticizing Hillebrandt's view and stressing the character of a Creation myth, disregarded the fact that a myth of the creation of a primordial world tends to be perpetually actualized in ritual.

When the lines quoted above were written I did not yet know W. Norman Brown's article on "The Creation Myth of the Rig

³⁸ See Alsdorf's remark in H. Lüders, *Varuṇa* (Göttingen, 1951), 1:332, n. 6.

³⁹ *Museum* 52 (1947), col. 200, in a review of Buschardt, *Vṛtra* (see n. 13 above). See also *Bijdragen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 107 (1951):72, and *Mededelingen Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen*, n.s., 14 (Amsterdam, 1951): 219.

⁴⁰ Ludwig, *Rigveda* 4 (1881):xi, and 6 (1888):173a; Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie*, 1st ed. (1889), 2:26 ff., and 2d ed. (Breslau, 1927), 1:28 ff.

⁴¹ See *IJ* 4 (1960):223-42.

Veda" that had appeared during the war in volume 62 of the *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (1942, pp. 85 ff.), nor Lüders's earlier interpretation of "Der Vṛtrakampf als vedischer Weltschöpfungsmythus," which was only published as late as 1951.⁴² The circumstance that similar interpretations of this myth were, independently from each other, published about the same time is a noteworthy coincidence. That the Vṛtra myth is a Creation myth (whatever modification one may want to propose for this term itself) seems now to be generally accepted.

The preceding brief remarks may not be superfluous since they provide a background for the following discussion of the "mountain." In the nineteenth century the "mountains" were commonly interpreted as clouds which contained the rain. Even Oldenberg was still inclined to believe that this was the *original* meaning of the myth (*Religion des Veda*, p. 138). Never before 1947, as far as I can see, had the "mountain" been equated with the primordial hill, whose presence in the Rigvedic hymns had not, indeed, been seriously considered at all. It may, therefore, not be out of order to add a few words in justification of this interpretation.

It may first be observed, then, in view of such texts as ṚS. I.32.2: "He slew the snake lying on the mountain" (*āham dhim pārvate śisriyāṇām*), that the concept of a snake winding around the primordial hill is also a well-known motif in other religions, for example, among the Semites.⁴³ Second, it should be noted that in the Vedic tradition traces are found of an ancient belief that the earth and the mountain(s) originally lacked a firm foundation and moved about until Indra fixed them. Thus ṚS. II.12.2 reads (in Macdonell's translation): "Who made the widespread earth when quaking steadfast, Who set at rest the agitated mountains, Who measured out air's middle space more widely, Who gave the sky support: he, men, is Indra." In the preceding hymn we read (II. 11.7-8): "Evenly the earth has expanded; even the mountain which wanted to run has subsided. The mountain sat down carefully" (cf. VI.30.3: "The mountains sat down like flies. Thou hast fixed [*dṛḥāni*] the spaces, O skilful one." X.44.8: "The shaking mountains and the plains he fixed"). In two

⁴² See Lüders, *Varuṇa*, pp. 183 ff.

⁴³ See Wensinck, *The Navel of the Earth* (n. 16 above), pp. 59 ff.; *Tree and Bird as Cosmological Symbols in Western Asia* (ibid. [1921]), p. 13. For Greece, see Harrison (n. 21 above), pp. 320 ff.: "when we remember that the omphalos is the very seat and symbol of the Earth-Mother, that hers was the oracle and hers the holy oracular snake that Apollo slew." Cf. also Eliade, *Traité d'histoire des religions* (Paris, 1953), pp. 250 ff.

Brāhmaṇas of the *Yajur-Veda*, there occurs a passage which, although containing an element that is foreign to the Rigvedic passages quoted, still also throws some light on this belief:⁴⁴ "Verily, the mountains were this first offspring of Prajāpati. They were winged. They continuously flew away wherever they wanted. Now this earth was at that time 'loose' (*śithirā*, *śithilā*). Indra cut off the wings of these [mountains], with them he fixed her. The wings became thunder-clouds. Therefore they commonly hover towards a mountain for it is their origin." Whether or not the "wings of the mountains" are an ancient element of the myth is of little import in this connection. The central motif in any case, which the *Rig-Veda* and the *Brāhmaṇas* have in common, is that Indra fixed (*adṛmhat*, cf. *ḍṛhāni* above) the earth or the mountain(s). This recurs in such a yajus as "Thou art firm (*dhruvām*), do thou make the earth firm (*ḍṛmha*)," in *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā* I.17, and in such ritual speculations as the following (*Śat. Br.* II.1.1.8-10): "He then brings pebbles. Now the gods and the Asuras, both of them sprung from Prajāpati, once contended for superiority. This earth was then trembling like a lotus-leaf; for the wind was tossing it hither and thither: now it came near the gods, now it came near the Asuras. When it came near the gods, (9) they said, 'Come, let us steady this resting-place [*imām pratiṣṭhām ḍṛmhamahai*]; and when firm and steady [*dhruvāyām āśithilāyām*], let us set the two fires on it; whereupon we will exclude our enemies from any share in it.' (10) Accordingly, in like manner as one would stretch a skin by means of wooden pins, they fastened down this resting-place; and it formed a firm and steady resting-place" (translation by Eggeling).

It is not necessary for the purpose of this study to enter into a more detailed discussion of the primordial hill and its symbolic representation on the sacrificial place by the fire altar (*védi*). It is hoped, however, that the preceding observations have made it sufficiently clear that, in spite of the difference between the various versions in which this mythic concept is represented, there is a fundamental notion that is common to both forms of the myth, namely to that of the *instabilis terra* (conceived either as the cosmic egg or as the mud which the boar brought up on his snout from the bottom of the waters) and to that of the primordial hill which lacked a "foundation" and had to be fixed. By combining the various data we get the following picture: In the beginning there was only a small hill, floating on the surface of the waters. From

⁴⁴ *Maitr. Samh.* I.10.13 (p. 152, line 12); *Kāth. Samh.* XXXVI.7 (p. 74, line 5).

it the earth expanded in all directions (*aprabhata*). By piercing this "mountain," in which the germs of all life were contained, Indra at the same time made it firmly rooted in the bottom of the waters. Since this mountain was the cosmic center, the central point of the earth, the whole earth became thereby "firm and steady" (*dhruvā, āśīthilā*). Thus the cosmic mountain not only was the origin of the earth but also came to function as the "peg" which secured the earth a firm support (*pratiṣṭhā*). This idea still survives in the later literature, where Mount Mandara as the cosmic pivot is called "Indra's peg" (*Indrakīla*) and the concept of a "mountain functioning as a peg" is expressed by the term *kīlādri*.⁴⁵ The word "earth-peg" (*ku-kīla*) for "mountain" has its parallel in Java where the name *paku buwana*, "peg of the world," is for the same reason given to the hill Tidar, north of the Borobudur.

COSMOGONY AND CONCEPTION

7. It need hardly be mentioned that such notions about the origin of the world as described above on the basis of the Old Indian data are far from rare. In the very instructive material collected by A. J. Wensinck from the literature of the Western Semites one meets with such passages as the following (from an Arabic source): "Forty years before Allāh created the heavens and earth the Ka'ba was a dry spot floating on the water and from it the world has been spread out." Although the purpose of the present study excludes a comparison with other mythologies, an exception must be made for the words in which the Syrian, Jacob of Edessa, described the primeval waters and the earth before the cosmogony: "Scripture says: 'The earth was invisible' because of Tehom which was stagnant and surrounded it on six sides like the embryo which is surrounded by the membrane in its mother's womb." Similarly a Jewish source likened the beginning of the world to an embryo: "The holy one created the world like an embryo. Like the embryo proceeds from the navel onwards, so God began to create the world proceeding from its navel onwards and from there it was spread out in different directions."⁴⁶ As these passages show, people sometimes interpreted the cosmogonic myth of their sacred tradition in terms of a cosmic conception, as we have seen on the preceding pages.

⁴⁵ See Johnston's note on *Buddhacarita* I.21 in *The Buddhacarita*, ed. E. H. Johnston (Calcutta, 1936), pt. 2, p. 6, n. 21.

⁴⁶ Wensinck, *The Navel of the Earth* (n. 16 above), pp. 18, 3, 19.

It can hardly be denied, indeed, that the Indian myth of the beginning of the world shows some resemblance to the conception of a human being. The question may be raised if this is due to a mere coincidence. The evidence of another mythology, which is to be discussed below, shows that this possibility must be ruled out. At this point, however, some preliminary remarks would seem required in order to prevent at least some of the misunderstandings that may arise here from the very outset.

In the first place, there can be no doubt about the cosmogonic myth being the conventionalized form in which a society tries to give an account of the world it lives in. In other words, myth, like religion as a whole, forms part of the total culture. On the other hand, although cultural anthropologists rightly stress the close connections that exist between the social organization and religion (for which Schärer's book may be cited as a classical instance), this does not account for the specific form of the cosmogonic myth. A dual system, for instance, may be found to underlie both the social organization and the mythology of a given society, and within the framework of this system the idea of the unity of the opposed moieties, that is, of the totality, may be emphasized. But, even if one should be willing to accept the theory that the mythology is here only a projection of the social reality, this reality cannot be said to throw any light on the concept of a primordial unity conceived as a world-egg.

A simple illustration of what is meant is the role of Viṣṇu in Indian mythology. It has been argued that at the same time Indra created the dual organization of the cosmos as upper world and netherworld Viṣṇu arose as the personification of the unity of the two parts, that is, of the cosmic totality. For this reason he has in later times two emblems, namely, the celestial bird, Garuḍa, and the underworld snake, Śeṣa, who symbolize his identity with both parts of the cosmos. In Vedic time Indra had continuously to repeat his primordial exploit and to reiterate his Creation act. The evidence of the texts would seem to suggest the conclusion that this took place at the beginning of each new year. If this is true, the obvious implication is that in the preceding days the world had fallen back into a state of indiscriminate unity which corresponded to the primordial world. In the mythology of later Hinduism this concept has been enlarged to gigantic proportions in the theory of the world years (*yugas*), after which the whole world was destroyed with all the gods, the only remaining one being Viṣṇu who, lying reclined on his snake, slept on the surface of the primeval waters,

which had resumed their rights. Now, when religion is viewed in the light of the social organization, the social importance of a mythical figure who impersonates the totality can easily be understood. It would, however, seem hard to explain how the social fact of the unity of a community could have engendered the religious notion of a primordial god existing in the void. On the other hand, there is no denying that in many respects there is a strong interdependence between myth and social organization.

In the second place, it is obviously necessary to distinguish in the cosmogonic myths between notions connected with confinement such as the umbilical cord, which must have been known to every adult, and notions concerning the prenatal state of the embryo. If a person can have any idea at all about his prenatal life, which is the fundamental problem to be discussed here, it can only have been received by way of introspection, that is as a recollection of a very early stage of his own existence, the memory of which is still present in his subconscious (or sometimes, perhaps, conscious) mind. The question that arises with regard to this possible category of prenatal notions is whether an anamnesis of one's prenatal state is possible.

Just to place this question in its proper religious context, it may be useful to quote what Eliade wrote on page 181 in his article on "Cosmogonic Myth and 'Sacred History'" (see n. 1) with respect to the initiation among the Aranda: "Such a terrestrial and paradisiacal primordiality—which constitutes both a history and a propaedeutic—is the one that interests the Aranda. In this mythical time man became what he is today; not only because he was then shaped and instructed by the ancestors but also because he has to repeat continuously everything that the ancestors did *in illo tempore*. The myths disclose this sacred and creative history. Moreover, through initiation, every young Aranda not only learns what happened *in principio*, but ultimately discovers *that he was already there*, that somehow he participated in those glorious events. The initiation brings about an *anamnesis*. At the end of the ceremony, the novice finds out that the hero of the myths just communicated to him is himself."

The sense in which the word "anamnesis" is used in the last two paragraphs is obviously not entirely the same. For the present moment, therefore, it may be useful to distinguish between two notions covered by this term. On one hand we are concerned with the question of whether it is conceivable that some individuals may, through direct anamnesis of their own prenatal life, have

read this into (or, recognized it in) the cosmogonic myth of their sacred tradition. On the other hand, in the case of the young Aranda as interpreted by Eliade, it might be better to speak of an indirect anamnesis, which enables the novice to identify himself with the hero of the primordial world. If it can be shown that an anamnesis of the first type is possible and does actually occur, this might throw some light on the psychic mechanism by which that of the second type, the indirect one, can take place. In that case, indeed, it might be argued that the novice can identify himself with the primordial hero owing to the fact that the myth functions as a generalized picture of everyone's prenatal state, and that via the myth, every novice is thus brought into contact with his own prenatal existence, without, however, being aware of it.

It follows, in the third place, that it will be necessary to distinguish between two problems: that of a possible function of the cosmogonic myth of helping an individual to reexperience his own conception and thus, in a way, start his life again, and the naturally very complex question as to whether (and if so, how) a myth, which forms part of a whole culture and, as such, is conventionalized, can be explained as originating in the personal anamnesis of a single individual, in short, the problem of the origin of the myth.

8. The chief difficulty which besets a student of Indian religion when he hazards to put these questions is not so much that he ventures upon entering a field in which he is a layman, as that experts are themselves still far from having arrived at an agreement. This is the main reason that has withheld me, for nearly twenty years, from overtly formulating this as a problem worthy of consideration.

The moot point with which we are here confronted is that of prenatal consciousness. Exactly twenty years ago Nandor Fodor published his book *The Search for the Beloved*⁴⁷ in which, elaborating Rank's ideas about *Das Trauma der Geburt*,⁴⁸ he pointed out that events which have taken place during the prenatal period apparently have been recorded by the embryo and can be reproduced in dreams in his postnatal adult life. The idea that man carries with him throughout his lifetime the recordings of non-sensory perception from his prenatal life obviously conflicts

⁴⁷ Nandor Fodor, *The Search for the Beloved: A Clinical Investigation of the Trauma of Birth and Prenatal Conditioning* (New York, 1949), viii + 400 pp.

⁴⁸ Otto Rank, *Das Trauma der Geburt und seine Bedeutung für die Psychoanalyse*, Internationale psychoanalytische Bibliothek, vol. 14 (Leipzig, 1924), 207 pp.

seriously with the current assumption of psychologists that consciousness only begins to develop after birth, along with the development of the organs of sense. It is not surprising, therefore, that psychologists have expressed their disbelief for this very reason. Accepting the possibility of prenatal nonsensory perception involves, indeed, a drastic change in one's general outlook on the problem of human consciousness. Not only the psychologists, however, but also the large majority of psychiatrists have so far felt unable to accept the conclusions at which Fodor had arrived in his psychotherapeutical practice. On the other hand, investigations in the field of prenatal psychology have since been continued, not only in the United States but also in England, the Netherlands and Czechoslovakia.

The difficulty that faces the student of the history of religions is that, being an outsider, he is not entitled to take a position in this dispute. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that the possibility of reexperiencing one's own conception might be of the greatest importance for our interpretation of religious phenomena, and particularly of cosmogonic myths. To illustrate this it will be sufficient to quote here the words in which a Dutch psychotherapist, after stating that "the faculty of recollection is connected with the ovum and not with the spermatozoon," summarizes the first recollections of the ovum as they are reproduced in the dreams of adults. The ovum "has come out of the ovary and is quietly waiting for things to happen. In Freud's terminology we have to do with a state of oceanic feelings. The ovum has the feeling of bobbing about, as it were, on a large expanse of water and simultaneously of being part of this water. One cannot yet speak of a real consciousness. There only exists an experience of infinity and of the ovum being part of this infinity. . . . This experience is often depicted in dreams by large waters, also by notions of collectivity, such as a group, a community, etc., clearly suggesting a corresponding ovarian experience, accordingly an experience of the time before ovulation. No recordings are known about spermatozoa" at this stage.⁴⁹

It is, of course, quite in line with the best traditions of modern science that in such a controversial problem, in which the basic assumptions of a discipline are being questioned, the dispute may

⁴⁹ M. Lietaert Peerbolte, *Prenatal Dynamics* (Leiden, 1954), p. 176; and *The Orgastical Experience of Space and Metapsychologic Psychagogy* (Leiden, 1955), pp. 18 ff.

go on for many years to come, and that it will be a long time before an agreement is reached. On the other hand, in some forms of modern art, such as painting and poetry, elements occur which can be interpreted as reflecting prenatal experiences, and some art critics as well as artists appear to be quite aware of this aspect and of the importance of the psychiatric theory. The main trouble for the outsider is that the psychologists do not seem to be very much interested in a discussion of the psychiatric evidence, as a result of which an agreement on a scientific level may indefinitely be postponed. Therefore, the only thing that can be done pending the question is to formulate provisionally the problem which naturally arises for the student of archaic cosmogonic myths.

In doing so, I may point out that in the Indian cultural tradition, in which some individuals believe, and are believed, to have a recollection of a former existence, a remembrance of one's own prenatal life is not at variance with the general cultural pattern. Although this does not in the least decide the scientific problem referred to, the descriptions in literary works of what their authors considered to be a direct anamnesis of their prenatal existence show that if one tries to interpret some data in the light of the theory elaborated by Fodor, Lietaert Peerbolte and others, one is not guilty of misrepresenting facts in the context of the culture concerned. Although it must be conceded that in India the cultural emphasis is on former existences rather than on prenatal life, an instance of such a (supposed or actual) recollection is found in a poem ascribed to the Tamil mystic Māṇikkavācakar, who is supposed to have lived about the ninth century A.D. The lines 11-25 of the fourth hymn of the *Tiruvācakam* (which Reverend Pope, for some mysterious reason, has chosen not to translate in his well-known edition) run as follows: "From elephant to ant, in the defectless births, having gone through the effects of karma, In the birth as a human being, in the mother's womb, having gone through the attacks of boundless worms, In the first month having gone through the dual state [meaning an uncertainty whether or not the embryo will develop?], In the second month having gone through [perhaps, one birth??], In the third month having gone through wantonness, In the fourth month having gone through great difficulties, In the fifth month having escaped from the springing lymph, In the seventh month having gone through the lowering of the earth [meaning uterus?], In the eighth month having gone through difficulties, Having gone through the pains which arose in the ninth month, In the proper tenth month, having gone through the

sorrowful sea of miseries, experienced along with my mother.”⁵⁰ Unlike this passage, which pretends to describe a direct personal recollection, those found in Buddhist literature which refer to the doctrine of the Bodhisattva’s conscious entry into the womb (*garbhāvakrānti*) and his conscious existence in the womb are only of secondary importance.⁵¹

Instances of a possible indirect anamnesis are of lesser interest because in these cases the author describes his experience in terms of the traditional concepts of his religion. It is true that what he describes within this conventional context is apparently his personal experience, but a possible interpretation of it as an anamnesis of prenatal life finds no support in this context. One is reminded, of course, of such well-known passages as *Rig-Veda* VII.88.3, where Vasiṣṭha, addressing his god, Varuṇa, records how he has entered the god’s subterranean palace and has been initiated by the god: “When Varuṇa and I mount the boat and propel it to the midst of the ocean, when we move across the waters’ ridges, we waver in the swing.” Here the seer is in the presence of the god of the undivided primordial world.⁵² It seems as though the seer cannot receive his final vision until the god has placed him in the boat (cf. verse 4: “Varuṇa placed Vasiṣṭha in the boat; the well-working [god] has made him an *īṣi* [seer] by his mighty powers”). In the light of the description of the oceanic feelings given in the modern psychiatric literature, it would seem interesting that the poet Vasiṣṭha here refers to his “rocking” or “swinging” (*īṅkhayāvahai*) on the waves. In contradistinction from the Tamil mystic, however, who probably lived some two thousand years later, this Vedic seer was apparently unaware of any possible connection between his mystic vision and his own prenatal life. The modern student of Vedic religion may consider the possibility

⁵⁰ The passage presents many serious difficulties, which may have withheld Reverend Pope from translating it. For the translation given here I profited much from the expert knowledge of Mr. A. Govindankutty, who is working at the Kern Institute. The translations of individual words which Pope gives in the “Lexicon and Concordance” to his edition mostly reflect an entirely different understanding of what the poet meant to say in the separate lines. The translation by H. W. Schomerus, *Die Hymnen des Māṇikka-Vāśaga (Tiruvāśaga)*, Religiöse Stimmen der Völker (Jena, 1923), p. 17, again differs in many respects.

⁵¹ See, e.g., the commentaries on Vasubandhu’s *Abhidharmakośa* 3 in Louis de la Vallée Poussin, trans., *L’Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu, troisième chapitre* (Paris/Louvain, 1926), pp. 54 ff., where a number of references to parallel sources are given. I owe this information to my colleague, Prof. D. Seyfort Ruegg. Also, see Alex Wayman, *IJ* 3 (1959): 64, 70, on the ten “states of womb.”

⁵² For this interpretation of the character of Varuṇa, see, e.g., *IJ* 8 (1964): 110 ff.

that the mythological figure of Varuṇa as the god of the primordial world could psychologically function for the devotee as a means of getting into contact with the earliest layers of his personality and of reexperiencing his own prenatal state, but this is bound to remain an interpretation that admits of no objective verification.

In the light of the current parallelism between myth and ritual, however, it should be noted that in the Vedic ritual of the initiation (*dīkṣā*), the *dīkṣita* must again become an embryo (*Śat. Br. III. 1.3.28*) in order to be reborn. The dangerous and inauspicious character of the *dīkṣita* while being tied (which is expressly stated in *Kāth. Samh. XXIII.6: p. 81, 11* and *Maitr. Samh. III.6.7: p. 69, 11*) must probably be explained from his being in Varuṇa's realm.⁵³ The same notion of rebirth also underlies the statement of the ritual texts that the sacrificer by sacrificing regenerates his own self (*Śat. Br. VII.2.1.6*). There is, however, no myth which directly refers to this previous stage in the womb, nor is there any association of the cosmogonic myth with the birth of an individual, such as is found in Hawaii. Here the Hawaiian creation chant, *Kumu-lipo*, is sung when the princess is with child until the child is born.⁵⁴

9. In the fourth and fifth sections of this study an attempt was made to demonstrate that the Vedic cosmogonical myth comprises two different stages: first, that of an undivided primordial world which consisted of "the waters" and the beginning of the earth floating on the surface of them; second, that inaugurated by Indra's throwing his weapon, the *vájra*, against the dragon or the mountain itself, which thereby became firmly founded.

If the interpretation of this act as a second stage of creation is accepted, the strongly aggressive character of Indra's deed, and the necessity of overcoming a strong "power of resistance" (*vrtrá*), impersonated by the dragon as guardian of that mountain, remains remarkable. It has further been inferred from the Rigvedic texts that it was this second stage that played a predominant role in the cult, inasmuch as the annual ceremonies which aimed at a renewal of life were a ritual reenactment of this primordial Creation act. For Vedic society, accordingly, this "breaking of the resistance" (*vrtrahátya*) was the main mythic event, which conditioned a renewal of the world and the individuals, and in the (presumably annual) ceremonies this renovation was brought about by contests and fights which imitated the primordial combat of the god.

⁵³ Cf., e.g., Heesterman, *IJF* 3 (1959): 251.

⁵⁴ Eliade, *Aspects du mythe*, Editions Gallimard (1963), p. 35.

According to the psychiatrists quoted above, some dreams produced during the psychoanalytic treatment of patients point to oceanic feelings of "bobbing on the waves." While in the earlier psychoanalytic literature this had been explained as a recording of the embryo being surrounded by the amniotic water, the study of prenatal dream material has led to the conclusion that these oceanic feelings must be traced back to the state of the ovum between ovulation and fertilization. Attention has further been drawn to a parallelism between these feelings and the psychic state which the mystic Eckehardt described in the words: "one is as empty as one was before one existed."⁵⁵

If we assume, then, by way of a working hypothesis, that the first stage of the cosmogonic myth is "somehow related"⁵⁶ to the oceanic feelings which the ovum seems to have recorded in its state between ovulation and fertilization, the question naturally arises if Indra's fight against the "mountain" may correspond to the fertilizing activity of the spermatozoon. It would not be difficult to interpret in this light the *vájra*, which penetrates the mountain and opens it, whereas there is hardly any detail in the Indian cosmogony that points to the Oedipus complex of the orthodox Freudian psychoanalysis. Some passages might be quoted that are particularly interesting in this respect (e.g. *Taitt. Samh.* II.5.3.2.): "When Indra had slain *Vṛtra*, his power and strength [*indriyám víryám*] went into the earth; this became the plants and roots." In this connection, such specific details as the riveting of the mountain or earth, which floated about on the waters, may be significant. In case one looks for an equivalent in prenatal experience, the parallelism with the embedment of the fertilized ovum is obvious. That the fertilization is expressed in the mythological symbolism by Indra's fight against the mountain is not surprising. It is, indeed, a well-known fact that the spermatozoon has to overcome a strong resistance by dissolving the hormonal liquids that surround the ovum.⁵⁷ In conception-dreams the ovum appears sometimes to have recorded this process as an aggressiveness on the part of the spermatozoon, which may result in a shocklike experience of the conception.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Lietaert Peerbolte, *Prenatal Dynamics*, pp. 176 ff.; also Nandor Fodor, *New Approaches to Dream Interpretation* (New York, 1951), p. 94.

⁵⁶ For these words, see below.

⁵⁷ Recent experiments with fertilization of ova *extra uterum* (see R. G. Edwards, B. D. Bavister, and P. C. Steptoe in *Nature*, February 15, 1969) provide a striking illustration.

⁵⁸ For the conception-shock, see Lietaert Peerbolte, *Prenatal Dynamics*, p. 79 ("there must be some shock, some thrill in conception") and pp. 165 ff., and *Orgas-*

On the other hand, the killing of a dragon as a heroic exploit is a widespread mythic motif, and there would be no reason to dwell on it so long as it is considered exclusively in the light of mythology. In the preceding, purely mythological, interpretation of the Rigvedic data, the aggressive character of both Indra's fight by which he created Life and the social contests which aimed at a renewal of this Life could be accepted as facts. The task that is now incumbent on me, however, is not only to test the tentative theory that Indra's opening of the mountain is the mythological equivalent of conception (for which Indra's riveting of the floating earth may serve as an interesting indication), but also to provide some evidence for the assumption that the fertilization of the ovum can actually be represented in a symbolic way as an aggressive act. In this connection it may be remarked that the vague terms "equivalent" and "related" are here purposely used to leave the question as to the specific character of this "relation" open in this stage of our investigation.

In this respect a reference to parallel myths of a hero's fight with a dragon would obviously be of no avail. Instead, it may be useful to consider more closely a ritual in which the fertilization of the ovum would seem to be symbolically reenacted. This is the dance which is still performed among the Toba-Batak when the god Pane na Bolon has completed his circular course and a new year will begin.

10. The main features of this "magic-religious dramatization of the 'total' cosmic renewal" are here briefly summarized from an eyewitness account of it.⁵⁹

On an open space a double square (one crosswise in the other) is drawn with flour in such a way that the eight corners thus obtained correspond to the eight points of the compass. On each of the eight points a symbol of the Tree of Life is drawn. The double square, which represents the middle world, shows the three colors (white, red, and black) that are symbolic of the three worlds. In the center of this cosmic symbol there is a drawing of a small tortoise (the naga *hurma di tano*), which represents the underworld deity. In the center of this naga, again, there is a circle, which accordingly is the most central point of this representation of the cosmos, and in this circle an egg is placed. Nearby, in a basket filled with rice,

tical Experience, p. 27 ("the conceptional attack"), p. 38 (the spermatozoon as "the enemy of the ovum"); Fodor, *New Approaches*, pp. 95 ff.

⁵⁹ Ph. L. Tobing, *The Structure of the Toba-Batak Belief in the High God* (Amsterdam, 1956), pp. 168 ff., 173.

stands the *tunggal panaluan*, the tree of life, which, as a trinity, represents under-, middle-, and upperworld (as described on p. 155). There are three priests (*datu*). After a communal dance before the *tunggal panaluan* the first *datu* starts dancing and, after finally having taken the *tunggal panaluan*, goes around all the points of the octagon drawn on the soil, then to the naga in the center, where he acts like a woman in childbirth. At last he replaces the *tunggal panaluan* in the basket. This first dance Tobing interprets as a "magic-religious dramatization of the vegetation, the inciting of the underworld to help bring forth a rich harvest in the current [new?] year" (p. 170). While this *datu* identifies himself with the naga, the underworld aspect of the High God, the second *datu* represents the High God as Pangulubalang, the middle world. He also, after making dancing movements, at last seizes the *tunggal panaluan* and performs a circular course around the octagon and finally replaces the staff in the basket. "The meaning of this dance is a renewal of the bond with the Pangulubalang, consequently a magic-religious renewal of the middleworld for the sake of the community" (p. 172). In the same way Tobing explains the third *datu* as representing the High God as the upperworld, and his dance as aiming at the provoking of rain in the new year.

Finally the first *datu* reappears (pp. 172 ff.): "After the customary invocations he let the *tunggal panaluan* drink palm-wine, rubbed fish, meat, etc. on it, poured water on it and then he moved away from it, dancing and hopping all the time. Then he seized it, moved it to and fro, and then up and down, performing the circular course. Then he caressed it like a child, pressed it against his ear and uttered a loud cry: '*Musu, musu, musu*' [enemy]. Palm-wine was drunk, fish and meat were eagerly eaten. At last he fixed his eyes on the egg in the center of the octagon, aimed the staff at it several times and then ran to the center and pierced the egg with it. Then he moved away, this time without the staff, whereupon the assistants killed the dog and the hen. With these dead animals, the fruits, etc., the lines of the octagon and the naga-drawing were wiped out, while the altar, the *pustaha*, the lance, the *porhalaan*, etc. were taken away. Thus the ceremony ended." According to Tobing (p. 173), the staff in this last dance represents the High God in his totality of under-, middle- and upperworld. The dance, a combination of three preceding ones, is "a magic-religious dramatization of the 'total' cosmic renewal, but also of the cosmic destruction, as the two are inherent. . . . The end of the year is the cosmic destruction and

renewal at the same time. The tree of life dies, a new one develops from the same trunk, nourished by the fruit fallen from the old tree." Tobing points to "the essential oneness of myth, rite and magic." There is a "symbolical destruction of the cosmos, the community included," and renewal by the planting of the same *tunggal panaluan*, which has been in the possession of the community from generation to generation, but which is now decorated with young leaves.

All this may be perfectly correct but it leaves the meaning of the egg in the very center of this symbolical Universe unexplained. Tobing only remarks that it "no doubt symbolizes the fruit of the old tree of life and consequently it is a representation of the new cosmic life" (p. 173). That it symbolizes new life can be hardly doubted (cf. e.g., Eliade, *Traité*, p. 354), but if it represents the fruit of the tree of life why is an egg chosen as a symbol, and why has the *datu*, after having moved the staff in a way that might be a symbolic representation of the coitus, to pierce it in the last and most dramatic moment of the ceremony? This final climax, the planting of the Tree of Life in the egg, rather suggests the idea of a cosmic conception, a reenacting of the primordial fertilization of the world-egg.

In that case the "rebirth" of the cosmos and the community would have to be induced by a new conception, as the first stage of a new world and new life. This notion, it is true, is not reported to be current among the Toba-Batak. On the other hand, if this supposition is correct (and it is, I think, the best way in which the central role of the egg can be explained) we have to face the consequence that such a symbolical fertilization of the world-egg is inconceivable unless there was in the past an intuitive knowledge of how the human conception comes about, that is, a direct anamnesis. Anyway, the element of aggressiveness in this planting of the "new" Tree of Life, and in general, the close connection between destruction and renewal should be noted. The ritual is instructive in connection with Indra's Creation act.

11. If, by way of hypothesis, we relate Indra's fight with the dragon "Resistance" to the struggle of the spermatozoon to conquer the "resistance" of the ovum, some further questions arise. The analysis of conception dreams has also brought to light the existence of a strong libidinous connection between the ovum and the maternal psyche before the conception.⁶⁰ In psychopathological cases there are indications of a fixation of the embryo's psyche

⁶⁰ Lietaert Peerbolte, *Prenatal Dynamics*, pp. 62 ff.

to that of the mother and to the ovary, which causes the fertilization to be experienced as a traumatic shock. Against this background the fact that in some myths not only the dragon but also his mother has to be killed may become meaningful.

In the *Rig-Veda* we twice find a reference to the mother of Vṛtra. The clearest passage is I.32.9: "Of declining strength was Vṛtra's mother, for Indra had thrown his weapon upon her. Above was the mother, the son was under. The Dānu lies like a cow with her calf." Although a different view has long been defended, it cannot be doubted that *dānu* is a term inherited from the Indo-Iranian religious language for "stream," with special reference to the primeval waters.⁶¹ The dragon, therefore, could be called "the son of Dānu" (*Dānavá*), although he is also himself called *Dānu*, as an impersonation of these waters. In III.30.8 one may hesitate between translating "Thou hast crushed, O much-invoked Indra, the handless one who lives together with [his mother] *Dānu*" or "who lived together with the primeval stream," but the first translation is more plausible.

In view of the small number of references to this mother *Dānu* (to which the mother *Danāyā*, mentioned in such later texts as the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, does not lend much material support), it is quite intelligible that some scholars have explained her as the product of the fantasy of later poets.⁶² Yet, we cannot entirely rule out the possibility that the concept of a mother of the dragon is rooted in the mythology of a remote prehistoric past. In Iran the dragon Aždahāk has also a mother, Ōtak,⁶³ and in the Old English epic *Beowulf* the hero first slays the monster Grendel himself (lines 710 ff.) but then, as the latter's mother takes revenge, he has to fight *under water* with "the mother of Grendel, a monstrous hag, doomed to dwell in evil waters and icy streams" (lines 1259-61). She is depicted as one of the "sea-dragons" or "serpents" (lines 1426, 1430).

It is mostly admitted that this heroic exploit of the epic has a

⁶¹ Cf. especially in Avestan: Aogamadaśca 77, "a river springing from the deep [namely, of the earth]." See Otto Paul, *Wörter und Sachen* 20 (1939):1 ff.; Stig Wikander, *Vayu* (Uppsala/Leipzig, 1941), 1:211; E. Benveniste, *Études sur la langue ossète* (Paris, 1959), pp. 118 ff. (esp. p. 120). For Vedic *dānu*, see, e.g., Bergaigne, *Religion védique*, 2:203, 220 ff.; Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 158; A. Minard, *Bulletin de la Société de Linguistique* 56 (1961):61; and Renou, *Études védiques et pāṇinéennes* 16 (1967):55.

⁶² Cf. Renou, *Vṛtra et Vrdragna*, p. 157: "'reposant avec les Dānu' qui peut être grammaticalement entendu 'avec la Dānu': toute la légende de la mère de Vṛtra sortirait-elle de ces deux passages?" and William Norman Brown, *JAOS* 62 (1942): 90: "Similarly there came into existence a mother Dānu for Vṛtra" (which he explains as a personification of **dā-nu* "bondage, restraint").

⁶³ Wikander (n. 61 above), pp. 161, 171 ff.; Molé, *IIJ* 3 (1959):303.

mythic origin. In this connection it is noted that in the Old Icelandic *Hrólfs Saga Kraka* a similar monster is said to have twice assaulted, *about the yuletide* (accordingly in midwinter), King Hrólfr's hall, until in the third winter it is slain by the hero Bǫðvarr. This detail is particularly interesting because in West Cornwall the period between Christmas Day and Twelfth Night is still celebrated by guise dancing, the streets of Saint Ives and the villages around Penzance being nightly paraded by parties of young people attired in strange costumes. Down to a hundred years ago, however, the guise dancers in Cornwall, as also in Scotland, used to enter the kitchens of the larger houses and to act there the old play of *Saint George and the Dragon*, hundreds of versions of which are found all over Great Britain.⁶⁴ Such data from the Germanic world may lend some support to the theory that in Vedic India Vṛtra had to be slain at the beginning of every new year, as a re-enactment of the Creation.

As for the mythological significance of the dragon's mother, however, it must be admitted that in the Vedic myth we are moving on insecure ground since the evidence is very scarce. The myth of Indra's killing *Dānu*, indeed, admits of two possible interpretations. On the one hand, it might be argued that the phrase "son of the primeval stream" has given rise to the notion of a mother that bears the name *Dānu*, in much the same way as in later times the Rigvedic word *Śácipāti* ("Lord of the power,") mostly used as an epithet of Indra's, was reinterpreted as "Husband of Śacī" and thus generated the figure Śacī, wife of Indra. After all, the terms *vṛtráputrā* ("having Vṛtra for a son") and *sāh* ("procreating mother") only occur in a single stanza of a relatively late hymn and may have been peculiar to the phraseology of a single late poet, who took the relation of the dragon to the waters that begot him more literally than others did. But then there still remains the entirely different question as to why this mother had also to be killed, and this is not so easily answered. If, on the other hand, we assume, in spite of the very meager textual evidence, that the killing of the mother of the dragon is a very old element of the myth, which can typologically be paralleled to the killing of Grendel's mother, it would be possible to point to the findings of the conception analysis, namely that the ovum as a "recording apparatus" preserves the memory of the ovary and of the mother's psyche, which, in prepsychotic states, may be experienced in

⁶⁴ See, e.g., A. K. Hamilton Jenkins, *The Story of Cornwall* (London, 1948), pp. 131 ff.

dreams as an overwhelming force that threatens the individuality of the ego. In the process of individualization resulting from the fertilization of the ovum by the spermatozoon, the psychic bonds which tie the embryo to the maternal psyche have to be cut. In other words, "the mother" has to be killed for the ego to be able to exist as a separate individual.

12. It goes without saying that we have here entered a field of mere conjectures. It is also clear that we are here confronted with some fundamental problems of interpretation of myths. For the Vedic Indian the Indra myth existed in its own right, and no modern theory which tries to find an equivalent to it in the subconscious mind is relevant as far as his system of concepts is concerned. To him the myth was a means of viewing the world and his life in the context of a given set of values. Myth in general enabled him to experience the brief compass of his individual existence as meaningful, both within his society and in a wider cosmic context. On the one hand, therefore, it is unacceptable to treat myths as mere fantasies or literary motifs, a procedure still not uncommon among philologists. On the other hand, there is no guarantee that every motif is equally meaningful. Besides, even if, in principle, the possibility is conceded that the main pattern of the cosmogonical myth can be correlated with an individual's prenatal life, we lack the criteria to determine just which elements should be viewed in this light. It would obviously be childish to expect that the whole cosmogony could simply be read as a recording of an individual's prenatal experiences.

For that reason no attempt will be made here to explain further details, although some of them, such as Indra's overcoming his father Tvāṣṭṛ (R̥Ṣ.III.48.4, IV.18.12), might prove meaningful from this point of view. The object of this study, however, can in the present state of things only be to draw attention to the possibility that the cosmogonical myth may have some aspects that have so far escaped notice.

TREE OF LIFE

13. The only exception that must be made concerns the Tree of Life, because this is one of the most important motifs in many cosmogonies. This tree, rising from the primordial hill, separates and at the same time connects heaven and earth (or, Upperworld and Underworld), and is as such the most striking symbol of the dual organization of the world and its inherent unity. From the

point of view of prenatal psychology it has been suggested that this tree represents the umbilical cord.⁶⁵ If the cosmogonical myth is actually "somehow connected" with a recollection about the ovum, both in its unfertilized state and after the fertilization, it is, indeed, fully legitimate to ask what the prenatal correlate of the Tree of Life may have been. Although any attempt to answer this question is at this moment bound to remain a provisional guess, an alternative solution to the one proposed by Lietaert Peerbolte may here be put forward.

If we consider the characteristics of the dual cosmos in Vedic mythology we find that the gods of Heaven are (1) "later born," "the younger brothers" of the gods of the Underworld; (2) more intelligent than their elder brothers. The latter are nearer to the primeval world of undifferentiated unity, which world was characterized by inertia and sleep (cf. Vṛtra sleeping upon the waters), whereas the Devas are "on this side of the Creation" (R.S. X.129.3). Now, one of the first things to develop in the embryo, after life has been "awakened" in it by fertilization, is the spinal marrow and the brain. It is a well-known fact that the embryo's head grows much faster in the first months than the rest of the body. This does not imply, it is true, that consciousness at that stage is already localized in the brain. On the contrary, if the findings of prenatal dream analysis which point to the existence of consciousness and a faculty of (necessarily extrasensory) perception are accepted—in spite of their admittedly revolutionary character—it must be admitted that the "viewpoint" of the perceiving and recording consciousness is at first remarkably floating. Sometimes, indeed, the moment of the spermatozoon approaching the ovum appears to have been recorded as seen from a point outside both the ovum and the spermatozoon, the nonindividualized consciousness still hovering, as it were, above the scene. On the other hand, these recordings, if accepted as such, must, although preserved in the subconscious mind, be considered to form part of a person's consciousness in the widest sense of the word, which in the later development of the human being is tied to the brain.

It may therefore be suggested, as a mere working hypothesis, that the prenatal correlate of the tree rising from the primordial hill is to be found in this developing spinal marrow. The myth, however, implies much more. The tree is the central world pillar which separates Heaven and Earth, and this separation inaugurates the dual organization of the Cosmos. If there is some truth

⁶⁵ Lietaert Peerbolte, *Psychocybernetica* (Amsterdam, 1968), p. 191.

in the hypothesis that this myth "somehow" reflects the embryonic development of a human being, the inevitable conclusion would be that the development of the newly conceived individual's psyche, which development runs parallel to that of the embryo, is characterized by a fundamental dualism, the brain functioning as the "seat" of the individual's consciousness, whereas at the lower end of the axis psychic components of a lower, say phylogenetic, stratum might be localized.

Whether or not indications for such an early dual organization can actually be found is a question that can only be answered by the study of dreams concerning the conception and the first stage of embryonic development. However, entirely speculative though this idea admittedly is, it would seem to find some support in the curious mystic anatomy on which the theory of the Yoga practice is based. The doctrine of the six *cakras*⁶⁶ and of the serpent Kuṇḍalinī which, sleeping at the lowest point (the *Mūlādhāra*), has to be awakened and to rise along the spine for the yogin to find final deliverance, can only be understood as the product of some intuitive knowledge and the experience of countless generations. This mystic physiology, although obviously at variance with the scientific reality, was (and is) apparently effective for the purposes of the yogin. Eliade observes⁶⁷ that the yogins "maîtrisaient une zone infiniment plus vaste que la zone psychique 'normale,' qu'ils pénétraient dans les profondeurs de l'inconscient, et savaient 'réveiller' les couches archaïques de la conscience primordiale, fossilisées chez les autres humains." What he here, from the point of view of the Yoga, characterizes as a fossilized psychic layer corresponds pretty well with the primitive, possibly phylogenetic, stratum whose existence was assumed above on the basis of the cosmogonic myth.

If, then, on the lines of the working hypothesis here proposed, one considers the possibility that some elements of the physiology of the Yoga originated in images of the subconscious mind which reflected the earliest stages of the embryonic development, some striking parallels can be pointed out in other religions. From Taoism the "embryonic breathing" as a means of returning to the embryonic state and getting one's life renewed is well known,⁶⁸ and Eliade has rightly equated the three "breath-exercises"

⁶⁶ For this doctrine, see O. M. Hinze, "Die sieben Lotusblumen des Kuṇḍalinī-Yoga als Darstellung der archaischen Gestaltastronomie," in *Symbolon, Jahrbuch für Symbolforschung*, 5:180-219.

⁶⁷ *Le Yoga* (Paris, 1960), p. 238.

⁶⁸ Maspéro, *Journal asiatique*, pt. 1 (1937), p. 193.

(*prāṇāyāma*) of the Indian Yoga with their Taoist parallel.⁶⁹ Starting again one's life from the very beginning and experiencing it on the level even of the life of a plant is considered one of the aspects of Yoga. On the other hand, this rebeginning is also a new Creation. As the same author puts it: "The archetype of the 'action' [namely, in the Yoga] is the Creation of the worlds, the cosmogony. In a sense, the yogin repeats in his own person the transformation of the Chaos into a Cosmos."⁷⁰ The lowest part, the *Mūlādhāra* ("root-container"), is said to support the spine (*Meru*), which functions as the axis of the human body just as in cosmology Mount Meru is the *axis mundi*.

The idea, suggested above on the basis of the cosmogonic myth, of a certain parallelism between the world axis and the spine is, indeed, fully confirmed by Yoga texts. In the mystic physiology the spine was considered to be a single bone (*Merudaṇḍa*), and Buddha's spine was said to be fixed like the world axis, which made it impossible for him to turn his head without turning his whole body.⁷¹ The serpent Kuṇḍalinī at the bottom of the spine is, accordingly, reminiscent of the close connection between the serpent and the Tree of Life in many cosmogonies.⁷²

A further confirmation may be seen in the theory of the two "veins" (*nāḍīs*) *Idā* and *Pīṅgalā* which, winding their way up the spine, ultimately emerge in the left and the right nostril, respectively. Since *Idā* is associated with the moon, and *Pīṅgalā* with the sun,⁷³ their position with regard to the central axis reminds us of the widespread concept of the two birds sitting on either side of the World-tree. In *Rig-Veda* I.164.20 one of them is said to eat the sweet berry, which apparently is identical with "the share of [the beverage of] life" (*amṛtasya bhāgām*) and the *mādhū* mentioned in the following stanzas, whereas the other bird looks on without eating. The phraseology suggests a comparison with X.85.13-19: "The one looks on all creatures, the other is born again [thereby] regulating the periods. By this [repeated] birth he becomes again and again new; as a signal of the days he goes in front of the Dawns. When he comes he creates a share (*bhāgām*) for the heavenly gods. The Moon prolongs his life [so that it is] long." In view of this apparently parallel passage it would seem likely that the riddle verses of I.164.20 ff. also refer to the moon and the sun,

⁶⁹ Eliade, *Techniques du Yoga*, 5th ed. (1948), p. 82, refers to Maspéro's article.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 231.

⁷¹ Eliade, *Le Yoga*, pp. 238 ff.

⁷² See, e.g., Eliade, *Traité*, pp. 249 ff.

⁷³ See, e.g., Eliade, *Le Yoga*, p. 242.

respectively. The moon is the vessel of the beverage of life, from which the gods drink their *amṛta* (*Śat. Br.* XI.1.4.4) and which is periodically refilled. Other interpretations have been proposed but it would be out of order here to discuss them.⁷⁴ The two birds of the Tree of Life are of preeminent importance in the Dayak religion, and here there can be no doubt that the bird on the left hand is associated with the moon, and the one on the right with the sun (Schärer, p. 33). Although the *Rig-Veda* does not mention it, there is some reason to assume that here the position of the two birds with regard to the tree was the same, since the association of the moon with the left side is likely to date back to the common Indo-Iranian religion.⁷⁵ The contrast of left versus right with regard to the cosmic center reflects an ancient mythic pattern which is rooted in the classificatory system. If, therefore, the two birds in the *Rig-Veda* are rightly equated with the moon and the sun, and if they may be assumed to have had the same position as in the Dayak religion—whether or not the latter has borrowed this notion from India—the mythic parallelism with the two “veins” or “arteries” of the Yoga is obvious. Since *Idā* is associated with the moon and the left nostril, and *Piṅgalā* with the sun and the right nostril, they appear to be situated with regard to the (mystic) axis of the human body in the same way as Moon and Sun are with regard to the *axis mundi*.

Since, then, it is apparently possible to equate the spine with the World-tree, we are led back to the myth, referred to above, of an early antagonism between Upperworld and Underworld. The myth has to be taken seriously, and in those archaic societies where it has its counterpart in a fundamental dichotomy of the tribal unity it is a serious matter. If it could be taken seriously not only as a myth but also as an anamnesis of the earliest embryonic state, it would point to the conclusion that as a result of the development of the spinal marrow and the brain a localization of different and opposite components of the human psyche takes place during the earliest embryonic growth.

14. In view of the importance which the equation of the world axis with the spine may have for our insight into the background (if not directly the genesis) of the cosmogonic myth, a few more words may be added. Some questions which might be of interest in

⁷⁴ See, e.g., Geldner's translation with his comment in *Der Rig-Veda aus dem Sanskrit ins Deutsche übersetzt* (Cambridge, Mass., 1951), 1:231; Paul Thieme, *Untersuchungen zur Wortkunde und Auslegung des Rigveda* (Halle/Saale, 1949), p. 73; and R. Shamasastri, *Festschrift Moritz Winternitz* (Leipzig, 1933), p. 142.

⁷⁵ See H. Lommel, *Wörter und Sachen* 19 (1933):252.

the context of this theory must, however, be passed over because they are too complex to be considered within the compass of this study. Thus it might be asked if there is any typological connection between the shaman's mounting the world axis to attain to Heaven and the rising of Kuṇḍalīni along the spine. Attention may also be drawn to representations in Indian sculptural art in which a tree is seen rising from the upright body of a god or a human being.⁷⁶

In connection with the Rigvedic riddle of the two birds, one of which eats the berry while the other looks on without eating, it may be pointed out that in India (*Pañcatantra* V. 14) and elsewhere the symbol of one bird with two heads is also met with. In the mythology of the Indians of Guiana (South America) the chief king-vulture-spirit has, according to the Makuchis and Taulipangs, two heads and one of these is the "devourer." See C. H. de Goeje,⁷⁷ who suggests that this might allude to the two-sided character of the bird: "heavenly spirit and earthly devourer."

It was assumed above that the "eating" bird of the Vedic myth was the moon and on account of the equations "Agni = Sun" and "Soma = Moon" on the one hand, and "Haoma = left" in Old Iran on the other hand (the left eye of an animal being sacrificed to Haoma, *Yasna* 11.4), the position of the moon on the left hand of the axis could be accounted for. If, however, we start from the wider set of equations "Agni = Sun = day = Upperworld" versus "Soma = Moon = night = Underworld," it may be expected that Upperworld and Underworld are not only situated at the top and the bottom of the world axis but also, on a horizontal plane, to the right and the left of it. This is, indeed, what is found in the Indian myth which relates how Prajāpati, the impersonation of the undivided cosmic totality, created the heavenly gods (Devas) with (or on) his right hand, and the Underworld gods (Asuras) with (or on) his left one.⁷⁸ The same pattern recurs elsewhere, for example in the Javanese shadow-play (*wajang*), where the performer (*dalang*) shows the shadow of the World-tree (*kekajon*) in the center of the screen, while the noble heroes are always shown on his right hand but the demoniacal characters on his left. For other instances I refer you to Bosch.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ See F. D. K. Bosch, *The Golden Germ* (The Hague, 1960), pp. 201-3 with plate 70; and cf. Eliade, *Traité*, p. 243.

⁷⁷ *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie* 44 (1943): 55.

⁷⁸ Cf. *Maitr. Samh.* I.9.3 (p. 132, line 16); *Kāth. Samh.* IX.11 (p. 112, lines 18 ff.).

⁷⁹ *The Golden Germ*, p. 220. The same motif, two heads facing each other and two eyes which occur twice on either side of a tree symbol, are found in a painting of Mrs. Evans, "an authentic naïf, an undisturbed and breath-takingly gifted primitive" (*Newsweek*, August 4, 1969, p. 37, where the painting is reproduced). In

If, then, there is a correspondence between cosmogony and embryogony (see Section 15 below), the mythic fight between the Underworld gods and their younger brothers, the heavenly gods, after the undifferentiated unity of the primeval world had been replaced by the dual organization of the Cosmos, must necessarily point to an intrinsic dualism in the psychophysical development of the human embryo. In this connection the myths of the primeval twins found among the Amerindians may be instructive.

In the myths of the Indians of Guiana the primeval Virgin-Mother gives birth to twins, Elder Brother and Younger Brother. The first is considered to be the spirit of Nature, whereas the younger one, who is cunning but lazy, is supposed to represent "the intellect already filled with personal desires. It is clear that the Indians consider man a descendant from the brothers, but it is nowhere stated definitely that his descent should be from Younger Brother. In fact man is a double entity. However, as regards that which makes him more than just one of nature's creatures, namely his intellect, he belongs to the spirits of light and thus to Younger Brother."⁸⁰

This quotation evidently contains a mixture of facts and an interpretation in terms of an (apparently Jungian) psychology. Whatever the merits of the latter may be, the fact that man is said to be descended from the two brothers may be considered significant. In this respect this myth is more explicit than the East Javanese myth of the brothers "Glutton" and "Withered Stem," "representing the two primeval forces in nature which divide the universe."⁸¹

In India, too, although man mostly identified himself with the heavenly gods, it is clearly understood that the existence of the cosmos is founded upon a balance of the two contrasting powers of Upperworld and Underworld. If this dualism lies at the root of the human personality itself, the many techniques to transcend it

spite of the fact, however, that she "has lived her 76 years in a remote North Carolina town," her "African and Caribbean heritage" to which the article incidentally refers makes any attempt at an explanation of her symbolism risky. The more or less "spontaneous" emergence of this symbolism nevertheless remains remarkable, even though forgotten impressions from her youth may have influenced the imagery. The mechanism of such a "recollection," apart from its contents, might merit a closer investigation.

⁸⁰ De Goeje (n. 77 above), p. 100. Cf. also de Goeje, *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 100 (1941):77, n. 1; 83, n. 2; *ibid.*, 101 (1942):238, 250 ff.; Paul Ehrenreich, "Die Mythen und Legenden der Südamerikanischen Urvölker," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 37, suppl. (1905):51 ("Bruderzwist"). The latter, characterizes Elder Brother as "weniger tatkräftig und schlau."

⁸¹ Bosch, p. 225.

may perhaps be understood as a regression toward the point where the dualism arose, that is, toward the conception.

STRICKER'S THEORY

15. The ideas sketched in the preceding pages had been developed as a working hypothesis long before the first volume of Stricker's work, *De Geboorte van Horus*, was published.⁸² The more striking, therefore, is the partial parallelism between his approach and the one here advocated. As Stricker remarks (pp. 11, 139, 155), it is common knowledge that in the ancient Egyptian religion embryogony and cosmogony are one and the same thing. The main object of his amply documented work (which is to be completed by two more volumes) is to demonstrate the constant parallelism in all religions of the ancient Near East and Greece between embryological and cosmogonical ideas. It need not be stressed that his material strongly supports the first of the two suppositions on which this paper is based, that is, that the cosmogony was conceived as a macrocosmic conception, a fertilization of the World-egg. Since Stricker also includes Vedic material, it may incidentally be noted that with regard to the Vṛtra myth, which he explains as a birth myth (p. 44), the Vedic evidence, when taken in its entirety, would rather seem to point to a different interpretation (see above, Section 9).

On the other hand, there is a fundamental difference between his work and the present paper with regard to the explanation proposed to account for the parallelism between embryogony and cosmogony. Stricker quite understandably starts from a more or less objective knowledge about the semen and the female organs of procreation. Real knowledge about the organs of the human female, however, was, even among the Greek physicians, admittedly very slight, as seen in Stricker (pp. 39, 57). On the other hand, the working hypothesis of an anamnesis advocated in the present paper presupposes not so much a knowledge about the embryonic state in general as rather the possibility of reliving one's own prenatal life. In this respect there is an unmistakable parallelism between the ancient religious practices which led a person back to his embryonic state and induced him consciously to start again, and on the other hand, a modern psychoanalytic treatment. Both aim at a catharsis which may result in a religious experience.

⁸² Stricker, 1:9-86 (see also *Mededelingen en Verhandelingen van het Voor-aziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap* "Ex Oriente Lux," vol. 14 [Leiden, 1963], 2:87-207 (see also *Mededelingen*, vol. 17 [Leiden, 1968]).

A single instance may illustrate the implications of these two different approaches. On the basis of prenatal dream material, it is assumed that at the moment of the conception there is a libidinous "field of attraction" between the ovum and the spermatozoon. At the same moment, as was mentioned above, there appears already to be some form of consciousness which perceives and records this mutual attraction.⁸³

It certainly deserves notice in this connection that in cosmogonies Love is sometimes mentioned as the most powerful factor in creating life. The primeval world itself, although containing all potentialities of life, is "darkness." This is said in R.S. X.129.3 and 4, as translated by Macdonell:

3. Darkness there was at first by darkness hidden; Without distinctive marks, this all was water. That which, becoming, by the void was covered, That One by force of heat came into being.

4. Desire (*kāma*) entered the One in the beginning: It was the earliest seed, of thought the product. The sages searching in their heart with wisdom, Found out the bond of being in non-being.

The "bond" (*bāndhu*) here mentioned is a "relationship" or rather "origin" (cf. I.164.33 *bāndhur me mātā pṛthivī mahā 'yām* "this great Mother Earth is my origin"). As for the "sages" (*kavāyah*), they are seers who through introspection and meditation (*hrdī pratiśya* "searching in their hearts") contemplate the first origin of this world in the "non-being."⁸⁴ It need hardly be observed that the contents of such a vision must to a large extent have been determined by the general cultural pattern. As Ruth Benedict observes with regard to the North American Indians, "the vision is generally regarded as an experience of the individual in isolation from his fellows. This is almost universally true, but it by no means follows, that either the means of inducing the vision or the 'revealed' contents of it are born out of individual consciousness. Nothing could be further from the truth. Just as the 'revealed' contents of supernatural experiences everywhere are cast in

⁸³ Lietaert Peerbolte, *Prenatal Dynamics*, pp. 30 ff., especially p. 44.

⁸⁴ The latest discussion of the "non-being" (*āsat*) as a source of the being is by R. Ambrosini in *Studia Classica et Orientalia Antonio Pagliaro Oblata* (Rome, 1969), 1:97, who rightly objects to Geldner's confusing "Nicht-sein" and "Nichts." The term *āsat* clearly refers to a primeval state of undifferentiated unity and may as such be paralleled with the state of the nonfertilized ovum. Gonda (*Die Religionen Indiens* [Stuttgart, 1960], 1:181) characterizes it as "eine Art . . . Chaos," "ein Destruktives": only the first of these terms would seem a correct description of the nature of *āsat*.

definite cultural patterns, so pre-eminently among the Indians."⁸⁵ De Goeje, who was intimately acquainted with the medicine men of the Amerindians of Surinam, on the one hand states that "Indian ecstasy is certainly genuine," but then adds that "it is doubtful, whether what is then revealed to them as dreams, is always real first-hand knowledge, pure revelation of the world-spirit. Clearly those dreams are governed by the ideas current with the respective tribe. Furthermore it is probable that in the interpretation of dreams and phenomena in the outer world, phantasy may play too active a part and often a medicine-man overrates his psychic powers. Imposture may occur, but it is an exception."⁸⁶ Anyway, it is the psychic mechanism which enables a seer to get his personal "genuine" vision that is of prime interest in this connection. Could its genuine character possibly be due to the fact that the seer "sees" his own conception reflected in the mirror of his culture? However that may be, this much is clear—the Vedic poet, when speaking of the origin of the world, refers not to an embryological knowledge but to a *mystische Schar*.

The Rigvedic poet's vision of Love as the primeval agent reminds us of a similar Orphic myth about the world-egg in the *Birds* of Aristophanes, which Jane Harrison renders as follows:⁸⁷

In the beginning of Things, black-winged Night
 Into the bosom of Erebus dark and deep
 Laid a wind-born egg, and, as the seasons rolled,
 Forth sprang Love, gleaming with wings of gold,
 Like to the whirlings of wind, Love the Delight—
 And Love with Chaos in Tartaros laid him to sleep;
 And we, his children, nestled, fluttering there,
 Till he led us forth to the light of the upper air!

Love is not a notion of embryology, and the religious importance of the cosmogonic myth can hardly be explained from a rational knowledge of a human being's conception and prenatal life, even if such a knowledge could be supposed to have existed in the remote prehistoric past when these myths must have arisen. In the case of Vedic India there is little evidence for such a knowledge. Therefore, the great importance attached to the myth of the cosmic conception and its unmistakable parallelism with the development of the embryo (Stricker) call for a different explanation.

⁸⁵ Ruth F. Benedict, "The Concept of the Guardian-Spirit in North America," *Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association* (1923), p. 41.

⁸⁶ De Goeje (n. 71 above), p. 61.

⁸⁷ *Prolegomena* (n. 21 above), p. 625.

15. It finally remains to say a few words on the question which has so far been purposely evaded by using such terms as "some relation," "somehow connected," etc. This is the problem of the origin of the cosmogonic myth.

It will be clear from the outset that in view of the complex character of this problem no simple answer is possible. Putting the question in this way is in itself already unusual. We are accustomed to accepting the existence of certain myths in a culture more or less as a given fact. The time when it still seemed possible to propose rationalistic explanations for their origin belongs to the past, and we have learned to acquiesce in the fact that we know next to nothing of how myths come into existence. It seemed, therefore, preferable to study in the preceding pages the function, rather than the origin of the cosmogonic myth.⁸⁸

It is, nevertheless, legitimate to ask how this myth may have arisen, but before trying to answer this question one would like to know how many of the cosmogonic myths are due to prehistoric or historical cultural diffusion and borrowing. Since there have been immense migrations from the earliest times onward, many striking parallelisms between cosmogonies from distant parts of the world may be the result of prehistoric contacts. However that may be, it would seem a likely guess that the origin of cosmogonical myths such as are found in historical times dates back to a remote prehistoric past. It is at any rate difficult to imagine a past when man had no myth at all about the beginning of things.

A second difficulty—and perhaps the hardest to surmount—lies in the circumstance that myth is part of culture, and that individual revelations are supposed somehow to fit in with the general cultural pattern. This is, for instance, what de Goeje found to be true with regard to the medicine man and the neophyte. The latter's training may be quite interesting from a psychological point of view,⁸⁹ but whatever "revelations" he may receive, he does not produce myths.

On the other hand, if there is actually such a close connection between embryogony and cosmogony, as Stricker has pointed out in the Egyptian religion, and traces of which it seemed possible to

⁸⁸ Eliade, *Traité*, p. 355.

⁸⁹ "Moreover, he has to strengthen his will-power and his courage in order to maintain himself as an ego when meeting the spirits and to recognize them; then those spirits will be ready to serve him, if only he will respect their being" (de Goeje, p. 61).

detect also in Vedic mythology, this can in the last resort only be explained as the result of a macrocosmic projection of a (necessarily individual) recollection of prenatal life.⁹⁰ In this respect the evidence would seem to leave no alternative. It need hardly be stressed that this conclusion only concerns the basic pattern of these myths. In the absence, however, of effective criteria to decide just which are basic elements of a myth and which only marginal ones, this proviso has only a theoretical importance.

About the circumstances under which "visions" may have been accepted by a whole community only speculations are possible. The following lines do not pretend to be more than that.

In a study by Canon H. Callaway on the religious system of the Amazon, which was published in 1870 and 1884 and has since often been quoted by modern anthropologists,⁹¹ he describes how a man with strongly pronounced neurotic symptoms finally becomes a shaman. The process is especially interesting because of the part which the people of the village take in it. The following may be quoted from this account: "So the man may be ill two years without getting better; perhaps even longer than that. He is confined to his house. This continues till his hair falls off. And his body is dry and scurfy; he does not like to anoint himself. He shows that he is about to be a diviner by yawning again and again, and by sneezing continually. . . . And people begin to see he has had what is good given to him. . . . At last he weeps aloud and when the people are asleep he is heard making a noise and wakes the people by his singing; he has composed a song, and the men and women awake and go to sing in concert with him. All the people of the village are troubled by want of sleep; for a man who is becoming a diviner causes great trouble, for he does not sleep, but works constantly with his brain, his sleep is merely by snatches, and he wakes up singing many songs; and people who are near quit their villages by night when they hear him singing aloud and

⁹⁰ Eliade describes the relation between cosmogony and embryogony in the words, "la cosmogonie sert ici de modèle à l'anthropogonie, la création de l'homme imite et répète celle du Cosmos" (*Travail*, p. 353). From the point of view of a man living in an archaic society, this is no doubt correct, since for him the cosmogonic myth is a last, irrefutable truth. The student of religion, however, has a right to ask how this myth itself may have arisen, and in that case priority should be given to the embryogony.

⁹¹ It has been quoted by Ruth Benedict (*Patterns of Culture* [London, 1968], pp. 193 ff.), and by Eliade (*Le Chamanisme* [Paris, 1951], p. 65). On the ill health of the prospective shaman, see Eliade, p. 54.

go to sing in concert. . . . In this state of things they daily expect his death; he is now but skin and bones, and they think that to-morrow's sun will not leave him alive. At this time many cattle are eaten, *for the people encourage his becoming a diviner* [italics mine]. At length [in a dream] an ancient ancestral spirit is pointed out to him. This spirit says to him, 'Go to So-and-so and he will churn for you an emetic that you may be a diviner altogether.' Then he is quiet a few days, having gone to the diviner to have the medicine churned for him; and he comes back quite another man, being now cleansed and a diviner indeed."

Such may possibly have been the circumstances under which a society could long ago—in the age of the R̥sis, as a Vedic Indian would have said—accept personal revelations as valid for the entire tribe.

FINAL REMARKS

16. In this paper attention was drawn to the remarkable parallelism between the conception and the embryonic state of a human being and, on the other hand, the genesis of the Cosmos as related in the Indian cosmogonical myth, which to some extent can be read as a tale of the cosmic ovulation and conception. The fact that in the Old Egyptian religion cosmogony and embryogony were much the same thing (Stricker) strongly supports this.

It was further pointed out that according to a psychiatric theory recordings of the prenatal state are preserved in the subconscious mind. If this is accepted, it can account for the paramount religious importance of the cosmogonical myth: if everyone bears with him a subconscious knowledge of his own embryonic life, one of the *functions* of the myth could be that it enables people indirectly to reexperience, via the macrocosmic projection, their prenatal state as a means of reintegration. As for the theory, no agreement has yet been reached (to put it mildly) among the psychiatrists about the occurrence and interpretation of dreams concerning the various stages of prenatal existence, from ovulation to birth. The ensuing suggestion, which belongs to the field of the psychology of religion, has here only been offered for consideration. It is entirely dependent upon the acceptability of the psychiatric theory. Besides, it is basically an interpretation of facts and as such difficult to verify.

As for the origin of the cosmogonical myth, which was only

briefly touched upon at the end, I agree with Stricker that in the last resort this myth must be a macrocosmic projection of the embryogony. With regard to the question as to how this projection can have come about, however, we hold different views. The character of the myth would seem incompatible with the assumption that it is based on some primitive science, that is, on objective knowledge. The only alternative is that it is based on personal "revelations" of seers, which, from a psychological point of view, must be considered to have consisted of images from their subconscious minds which reproduced recordings of their prenatal state. This, again, presupposes the acceptability of the psychiatric theory.

In conclusion a remark of a general character may be added. Ever since his early writings, Mircea Eliade has stressed the importance in archaic Asian religions of "l'éternel retour," of man's desire periodically to return to the primeval origins, to live again *in illo tempore* in order to bring about a total renewal of the Cosmos.⁹² That the archaic cultures regarded life more as a cyclical than as a linear process and that the beginning of a new year consequently had the character of a new creation had, it is true, been known long before. The notion of a periodical renewal and reintegration of society and the Cosmos has also been shown to exist in the Indonesian religions of the Ngaju Dayak and Toba-Batak. That in the Taoist embryonic breathing this regression could, on the level of the individual, take the form of a return to the embryonic state was also known. What Eliade particularly stressed, however, was the negative character of life when viewed as a linear process, the "Terror of History."⁹³

The modern "secularized" life of the Western world has no counterpart to the archaic ceremonies which enabled man at certain intervals to abolish time and to experience his world as renewed. In the modern world, as Eliade sees it, on the one hand man lives in endless time. On the other hand there are indications to show that in this same world the quest for a widened consciousness is becoming of prime interest. It is clear that in both respects the rediscovery of the prenatal world by modern psychiatry, if its findings turn out to be correct, will mean an immense widening of man's inner world. If modern science confirms that it is possible to recollect and reexperience the beginnings of one's existence, the

⁹² See, e.g., *Techniques du Yoga*, pp. 83, 234 ff.

⁹³ See, e.g., *Cosmos and History, the Myth of the Eternal Return* (New York, 1959), pp. 146, 153, passim.

cultural impact of such a development can hardly be overrated. As it seems, modern artists are now among the first to explore, in an intuitive manner, the way leading to a world which was forgotten, both individually and by Western culture, and to rediscover the possibility of a widening of one's field of awareness.

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6. THE HEAVENLY BUCKET

1. Although the Vedic notions of a celestial bucket have more than once been discussed, it would seem that the real difficulties of the problem have not been sufficiently realized. Equating it to "den steinernen Himmelsbrunnen"¹ raises questions which remain unanswered. While Lüders in his *Varuna* interpreted the pail in the light of the theory of the celestial ocean, it cannot be overlooked that his impressive life-work, as far as Alsdorf's devoted editorship has managed to restore it, obviously represents different stages in the development of Lüders's views on Vedic mythology.² On pp. 174 and 332, where Alsdorf gives Lüders's last ideas on the "mountain", one is bound to conclude that Lüders had here almost come to realize that the Vala was the primordial hill, even though he did not apparently realize the full cosmogonical implications of his cosmological views. As Alsdorf (p. 174 n. 2) remarks, it was obviously impossible for him to conform the chapter on the Vṛtra-fight to this new insight, which would have required a complete re-writing of it. Anyway, it looks as if Lüders, at the end of his life, stood on the threshold of a quite different conception of Vedic mythology. One of the most striking passages in this respect is found on p. 387 n. 5, where he clearly recognizes the consequences of his new interpretation of the Vala myth. It is not, however, the object of this brief paper critically to examine Lüders's theory, including the silent presuppositions of his approach. Lommel has rightly pointed to its positivistic or rationalistic character; see DLZ 74 (1953), cols. 402, 404, 405; Oriens 6 (1953), p. 333. But then, a "naïve realism" was characteristic of the older generations of philologists in general. It has, no doubt, much hampered the progress in this field.

2. The following observations are based upon the assumption that the speculations about the waters being a *pratiṣṭhā* of the earth, and about the earth as a receptacle of these (subterraneous)

¹ Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie* I², p. 437 n. 1 and p. 322 "Brunnen am Himmel". Cf. also Asia Major 1 (1924), p. 791.

² Cf. Alsdorf, *Vorwort des Herausgebers*, p. XVIII: "wir haben zwanzig, dreißig und mehr Jahre alte Ausführungen vor uns."

waters¹ reflect old cosmological ideas. In later Indian and Indonesian art the Tree of Life is represented as rooted in this *pâttra* under the earth.² Indra's demiurgic act consisted in his opening the primordial hill, which was considered either identical with, or enveloping this receptacle.³ In the Rigveda the latter is sometimes likened to a pail full of goods, e.g. IV.20.6 "The frightful one pierces [the Vala] as a solid enclosure crammed with goods like a pail (*kôsa*) (full of) water".⁴ From other religions the notion that the underworld is such a receptacle of goods is well known.⁵

¹ Cf. ŚB. VI.7.1.17 *tāsyā 'pa evā pratiṣṭhā | apsu hīme lokāḥ pratiṣṭhitāḥ*, VI.8.2.2., XII.5.2.14 *āpo vā asya sārvasya pratiṣṭhā*, VII.4.1.8 *yāthā ha vā idam puṣkaraparnām apsu ādhyāhitam evam iyām apsu ādhyāhitā*, cf. ŚBK. I.1.1.6 (: ŚBM. II.1.1.8) *ātha heyām tārhi prthivy [āya]te 'vāsa. yāthā puṣkaraparnām lelāyéd evāḥ ha sma lelāyati. tāḥ ha sma vātaḥ sām vahati*, (etc.), AB. II.6.4, GB. II. 3.2 *dyaur antarikṣe pratiṣṭhitā, 'ntarikṣam prthivyām, prthivy apsu, āpaḥ satye* . . . See, e.g., S. Lévi, *Doctrine du sacrifice*, p. 159 n. 5, Lüders, p. 120 n. 5, Kuiper, IIJ, 8, p. 107. For the earth as a receptacle cf. MS. I.4.10 (p. 59,5), KS. XXXII.7 (p. 26, 14) *iyāḥ vā etāsām pātram*. As for Lüders's objection that this theory is later than the main part of the Rigveda (*Varuna*, p. 121f.), see below, sect. 6 and in general, *Hist. Rel.*, 10 (1970), pp. 93-98.

² See F. D. K. Bosch, *The Golden Germ, An Introduction to Indian Symbolism* (Indo-Iranian Monographs, vol. II), 1960, plate 83 (painting at the Joganmohan Palace, Mysore) and plates 27a-d, 28a-c, 30a-d (the *pūrṇakalāśa*), 66-67 (the *gunungans* of the Javanese wayang). Bosch explained the "bowl of Plenty" as a secondary development of what he called the *padmamūla* (pp. 110-113, 156f.). Otherwise, e.g., E. B. Havell, *A Handbook of Indian Art* (1920/1927), p. 43: "The vase forming the base of the pillar stood for the cosmic waters", G. J. Held, *The Mahabharata* (1935), p. 209: "this kalāśa might be the representation of the celestial ocean".

³ Cf. *ādrim*: *bhid* I.62.3 = X.68.11, IV.3.11, V.52.9, VIII.60.16, X.28.9, 45.6; *dy* IV.1.14; 16.8. Cf. *adribhid* VI.73.1. *dsmānam*: *bhid* IV.16.6. *ūrvām*: *trd* VI.17.1 (*ū. gavyam*, cf. V.29.12 *gavyam cid ū. . . āpa vran*), X.74.4 (*ū. gōmantam*, cf. IV.1.15; 16.6 *vrajām gōmantam . . . vi vavruḥ*). *vrajām*: *dy* VI.66.8, X.99.11 (IV.20.6 ex coniectura). *valām*: *bhid* II.11.20, 15.3, 15.8, III.34.10, VIII.14.7, X.62.2 [cf. I.52.5 *valāsyā paridhīn*, X.68.10 *valāsyā jāsum*]; *dy* I.62.4, X.138.1. *vrtrām*: *ava-bhid* II.11.18 [cf. *vrtrāsyā śraḥ*, I.52.10, VIII.6.6, 76.2]. *gīrīm*: *bhid* IV.17.3, X.89.7 (*nāvam in nā kumbhām*). *pārvatam*: *vi-bhid* I.85.10 [*vi-vr* V.32.1]. Cf. *khāni*: *trd* II.15.3 (*nadīnām*), VII.82.3 (*apām*). *ūtsam*: *trd* IX.110.5; *dy* V.32.1. *avatām*: *trd* II.24.4.

⁴ *ādartā vājraṃ sthāviraṃ nā bhīmā udnēva kōsām vāsūnā nyṣṭam*. The emendation *vrajām* is generally accepted, cf. VI.66.8 *sā vrajām dārtā*, X.99.11 *vrajām darayad*.

⁵ Cf., e.g., W. B. Kristensen, *De rijkdom der aarde in mythe en cultus*, in *Verzamelde Bijdragen tot kennis der antieke Godsdiensten* (1947), pp. 291-314 [= MNAW N.R. 5 N°. 12, 1942]. Kristensen discusses the origin of the symbol of the *plithos* and refers to Gruppe, *Griechische Mythologie*, p. 816, Blinkenberg, *Hades' munding*, in *Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab Medde-*

The R̥gvedic references to a world crammed with goods (*vásunā* or *vásubhir nyṛṣṭaḥ*) are rather frequent. Thus X.108.7 mentions a "treasure-house, founded on a rock, full of cattle, horses (and) goods", which is guarded by the Paṇis.¹ These words (*nidhīḥ* . . . *ādribudhno*), which obviously denote the Vala, remind us of the *kośo bhūmibudhno* in ChUp. III.15.1, although here the term is couched in cosmological speculations.² It has, indeed, been argued elsewhere, that in the R̥gveda *ādri-* is one of the terms for the nether world and the primordial hill.³ At first sight, this might seem at variance with *divó* . . . *nidhim* in I.130.3 "He found the treasure of Heaven, laid down in a secret place like a bird's young, enveloped in the rock, inside the endless rock",⁴ but Hillebrandt was probably right in taking this "treasure of Heaven" as denoting the sun.⁵ Cf. II.24.6 *nidhim paṇinām paramān gūhā hitām* (in a reference to the Vala-myth), VII.88.2 *svār yād āsman* "the sun in the rock"⁶ and X.68.7 (quoted by Hillebrandt, n. 2), which I translate as follows: "He [viz. Bṛhaspati] himself drove upwards the (young) of the mountain, the reddish (cows), as if (he drove out) the young of a bird after having broken (their) egg-shells".⁷ The verb *úd ajati*,

leiser, 2, 5 (1919). From the more recent literature I only quote E.A.S. Butterworth, *The Tree at the Navel of the Earth* (Berlin 1970), p. 101ff.: "The Lunar Crescent and the Bowl".

¹ *ayām nidhīḥ sarame ādribudhno gōbhir āśvebhir vásubhir nyṛṣṭaḥ, rákṣanti tām paṇāyo yé sugopā(h)* . . . See Hanns-Peter Schmidt, *Bṛhaspati u. Indra*, pp. 186, 188, 240, who has contributed much to a better insight into the nature of the Paṇis. *nidhīḥ* is not „der geraubte Schatz" (Lüders, p. 131, in accordance with the traditional interpretation. He also holds the Paṇis to dwell along a celestial river, p. 385 n. 2).

² *antarikṣodaraḥ kośo bhūmibudhno na jiryati, diśo hy asya sraktayo dyaur asyottaram bilam*. See Lüders, p. 81.

³ See IIJ. 8, p. 108 and Hist. Rel. 10 (1970), p. 106ff.

⁴ *āvindad divó nihitam gūhā nidhim vér ná gārbham párvitam āsmany ananté antár āsmani*. Geldner's reference to *dyūbhakta* is obviously due to Sāyaṇa's influence (ad IV.1.18: *dīptiyuktaṁ, devaiḥ sambhaktaṁ vā*), but while "himmelgeschenkt" (*rátnam*, IV.1.18) is possible, "von den Himmlischen geschenkt" (*dhendvaḥ*, I.73.6) is quite impossible. Lüders, p. 164, renders "die vom Himmel zugeteilten" but p. 616 "die dem Himmel gehörenden".

⁵ Asia Major 1 (1924), p. 789f.

⁶ See IIJ 8 (1964), p. 110ff. Hillebrandt, who rendered *āsman* as "eine Stein-, eine Eischale", has overlooked the cosmogonical implications of the word.

⁷ *āṇḍeva bhittvā śakunāsya gārbham úd usṛtyāḥ párvatasya tmānā 'jat*. It would seem impossible to take as the subject of *bhittvā* either the *gārbha* (Geldner, H.-P. Schmidt, *Bṛhaspati u. Indra*, p. 220) or their mother (Renou,

though commonly translated as "to drive out, expel", expresses that the *Uśāsas* are driven from the underworld as their pen to the upperworld (cf. Lüders, p. 125 on *úd vahati*). The words "treasure of Heaven" in I.130.3, accordingly, may denote the sun while imprisoned in the primordial hill before it is delivered by Indra. It must be admitted, however, that in V.45.1 *divó viśyānn ādriṃ ukthaiḥ* "opening the rock of Heaven with his verses" the addition of *divó* cannot easily be explained.¹

3. If such words for "rock" like *ādri* and *ásman* could denote the underworld, a comparison of X.108.7 *nidhiḥ . . . ādribudhno* with I.130.3 *divó nihitam . . . nidhim . . . antár ásmāni* may give the clue to the interpretation of IX.86.3 *kósaṃ divó ādriṃātaram*. Soma is here addressed in the words: "Run thou, like a courser that is urged on, to the prize, as a sun-finder to the pail of Heaven that has the rock for its mother". The last epithet has often been discussed.² It would seem that, just as the Vala is "founded upon the rock", so the pail is enveloped by it like a *gárbha* by its mother.³ As will be argued below, the term *kósa* refers, rather than to Hillebrandt's "Himmelsbrunnen" (see p. 144, n. 1) or Lüders's "Urquell am Himmel",⁴ to a receptacle in the underworld. In that case, however, the question will have to be answered how this could come to be called a "pail of heaven".

EVP. 15, p. 73). The correct translation was given by Lüders, p. 522. For the *gárbha* of the mountain, see IV.19.5 and Lüders, pp. 171, 325 ff.

¹ "Herbei (kam) der den Fels des Himmels durch Wissen, durch Sprüche auseinandergehen lassende (Dichter)", H.-P. Schmidt, *Byṛhaspati u. Indra*, p. 175, who, however, does not discuss the problem of *divó*. In IIJ. 8, p. 119 f. it was pointed out that, apart from this single passage, *Uśas* is everywhere said to come from the nether world (as might be expected *a priori*!). Otherwise Lüders, p. 325, whose reconstruction of the cosmology resulted in his statement "Die Morgenröten aber sind bei Nacht im Himmelsquell" (p. 385 n. 2).

² See Oldenberg, *Noten* on this passage and cf. Ludwig "des himels kufe, die vom stein geborene", Grassmann "zum felsentsprossnen Himmelskrug", Hillebrandt, *Ved. Myth.* I², p. 437 n. 1 "den himmlischen Eimer, den steinernen Himmelsbrunnen". Lüders, p. 332 n. 2 took it to mean "daß der himmlische *Kósa* aus Stein gemacht ist", but on p. 380 n. 3 he followed Geldner and interpreted *ādri* as "Preßsteine", which meaning he had rejected in the preceding passage.

³ "Vermischung der himmlischen und der irdischen Gegenstände" (Lüders, p. 380), the *kósa* standing for the *dronakalaśa* of the later ritual. Otherwise Oldenberg, ZDMG. 62, p. 465 (*ādhavanīya*) and Hillebrandt, *Ved. Myth.* I², pp. 437, 478.

⁴ *Varuṇa*, p. 376 n. 12, cf. 380 n. 3 "die Kufe im Himmel", p. 383 (*kósa*, = "Wasser, das am Himmel fließt"), p. 285, etc.

In the cosmogonical myth, after Indra had split open the primordial hill (see p. 145, n. 3), the waters, in the shape of four rivers, flowed through the holes (*khāni*) in four directions over the earth.¹ Hence the epithet *āsmavraja* of the rivers in X.139.6 *nadīnām āpāvṛṇod dūro āsmavrajānām*. When an *ādri* is mentioned in this connection, as in I.73.6 *parāvātāḥ . . . vi sindhavaḥ samāyā saṣrur ādriṃ* "From afar the rivers, together, flowed through the rock", there is (against Lüders, pp. 164, 616) no reason to take it here in a sense different from the current one. A reference to the primordial hill of the cosmogony has long been recognized in AS. XVIII.4.30 "They milk from the pail, the jar with four orifices, as milch-cow, refreshment rich in 'honey' (*mādhu*), for well-being".² The *kalāśa cāturbīla* suggests a comparison with the Rigvedic "maiden who has four braids" on which two birds have sat down.³ Here the *vēdi* is meant, which is a well-known symbol for the earth.

¹ See Lüders, p. 284 ff.: "Die vier Himmelsströme im Veda", and further, e.g., B. H. Kapadia, *The fourfold Division of the heavenly River in the Purāṇas*, Purāṇam 4 (1962), pp. 146-153, and for non-Indian parallels, e.g., Lars-Ivar Ringbom, *Paradisus terrestris, Myt, Bild och Verklighet* (1958), E. A. S. Butterworth, *The Tree at the Navel of the Earth* (1970), pp. 8, 53, 116, 118.

² *kōśam duhanti kalāśam cāturbīlam idāṃ dhēnuṃ mādhumatīm svāstaye*. See my note in Bijdr. TLV 107 (1951), p. 79 n. 25. For *cāturbīla*, cf. II.15.3 *vājreṇa khānyatrīṇaṃ nadīnām*, etc. (above, p. 145, note 3). Earlier interpretations are not known to me. Lüders, *Varuṇa I* (1951), p. 285 (cf. II, 1959, p. 381) gave a somewhat different explanation of this "Vorstellung von den vier aus dem Wasserbehälter im höchsten Himmel kommenden Strömen" and referred to IX.74.6 *cātasro nābho nihitā avo divo havir bharanti amṛtam ghytāscūtāḥ*, where he associates *nihitā* "(dort) angebrachte" with *trīṭīye . . . rājasi* in pāda b. It would seem very doubtful, however, if *avo divo*, *havir bharanti* can mean "tragen vom Himmel herab die ambrosische Spende" (p. 285). In view of V.40.6 (*māyāḥ*) *avo divo vartamānā(h)* "unter dem Himmel" (Geldner), VIII.40.8 *yā nū śvetāv avo divā, uccārātā(h)* "unterhalb des Himmels" (idem) and I.163.6 *avo divā* "unterhalb des Himmels" it is certainly more natural to construe *nihitā avo divo* "sind unterhalb des Himmels angebracht" (Geldner), whether or not this means the same thing as in IX.89.5 *samāne antār dharūṇe niṣattāḥ*.

³ RS. X.114.3 *cātuṣkapardā yuvatī . . . tāsyām suparṇā vṣaṇā nī śedatur yātra devā dadhīre bhāgadhēyam* (YV. *cātuṣśikhaṇḍā*). Cf. Bijdr. TLV 107, l.c. Since it is beyond doubt that the verse refers to the *vēdi* (Āp. ŚS. IV. 5.1 with Caland's note, cf. Ludwig, *Der Rigveda V*, p. 304, Hillebrandt, *Ved. Myth.* I², pp. 429, 431 n. 2, Geldner, *Übersetzung a.l.*), the epithet is mostly explained as referring to the *cātuṣkoṇā vēdiḥ* (Ludwig, Geldner). The use of *-kaparda-* in the epithet would, however, be better understandable if the maiden is explained in a mythical, rather than ritual, way, the braided hair standing for the four rivers that stream down from the top of the mountain. The *vēdi* mythically represents the whole earth, cf., e.g., MS. III.8.3 (96, 6), KS. XXV.4 (106, 13), XXV.6 (110, 2), XXVIII.1

A similar notion of a subterranean Soma-vessel accounts for RS. VI.69.6, where the poet addresses Indra and Viṣṇu in words which in fact only apply to Viṣṇu alone, viz. *samudrá sthaḥ kalásāḥ somadhānaḥ* (cf. *kalásā somadhānā* in 2). They express the idea that in the cosmic waters under the earth¹ there was a receptacle for the *amṛta/soma*, the elixir of the waters.² Hence the term *kalásā* could also refer to the primeval waters themselves in the tale of the *Amṛtamanthana*, cf. Mhbh. I.15.2 crit.ed. *mathyatām kalasodadhiḥ* "churn ye the ocean, which is the (*amṛta*-) jar".³ Since the Tree of Life was rooted in this very *somadhāna*⁴ the conception of the "Soma-yielding Áśvattha" (*áśvattha somasavana*) in ChUp. VIII.5.3 may have been based upon the idea that through the stem of the world-tree the Soma rose up from its subterranean receptacle to the third heaven, where the gods revelled.⁵ Thieme, *Untersuchungen zur Wortkunde und Auslegung des Rigveda*, p. 68, rightly concludes that only in post-Rigvedic times this tree came to be thought of as a celestial one. Originally the Áśvattha was identical with the cosmic axis and as such rooted in the earth.

Like the *kóśa*, the *útsa* ("well") from which the waters sprang forth (Lüders, p. 384ff.) was located under the earth. Cf., e.g., V.32.1 "Thou splitst the well open, thou sentst forth the (water from the) orifices, thou setst to rest the flood (*arṇavá*) that was hemmed in. When thou, O Indra, uncoveredst the big mountain,

(I52, 9), XXXI.10 (12, 8), XXIX.8 (177, 8), XXXVII.16 (97, 3), TS. VI.2.4.5, ŚB. I.2.5.7, I.3.3.9, III.7.2.1. If the *yuvati*, accordingly, here stands for the primordial hill, the two birds can be equated to the wellknown two birds on the cosmic tree in RS. I.164.20 (lastly discussed in Hist. Rel. 10, 1970, p. 127).

¹ For *samudrá* = *āpaḥ* see p. 145, note 1 and cf. IFJ. 8, p. 125.

² Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 107 and cf. MS. IV.1.9 (11, 1) *amṛtaḥ vā āpo*, GB. II.1.3 *amṛtam āpaḥ*, TS. I.7.5.3, ŚBM. XI.5.4.5 *āpo 'mṛtam*. Geldner took *kalásā* in the sense of "belly" (cf. *kāvandha*-) but this is impossible. For Viṣṇu's connection with Soma cf. II.22.1 and VIII.3.8, 12.16.

³ Cf. G. J. Held, *The Mahabharata*, p. 209. Later poets did no longer understand this compound and replaced it by such terms as *kṣīravāridhiḥ*, cf., e.g., Matsyapurāṇa 249.14 *mathyatām kṣīravāridhiḥ*, 20 *mathitum kṣīravāridhim*, 54 *mathitāḥ kṣīrasāgarāḥ*, 57 *mathyatām mathyatām sindhuḥ*.

⁴ See above, p. 145, note 2.

⁵ Cf. AS. V.4.3 *áśvattho devasádanas tṛtīyasyām itó divi*, RS. X.135.1 *yásmin vṛkṣe supalásē devaiḥ sampābata yamāḥ* and cf. Paul Thieme, *Untersuchungen zur Wortkunde und Auslegung des Rigveda*, p. 67. Perhaps the *Ilya vṛkṣa* of Kauṣ. Up. I.5 should be connected with these passages. See Thieme, *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschr. der Martin-Luther Universität Halle-Wittenberg*, Jahrg. 1 (1951-52), Heft 3 (Gesellschafts- und sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe Nr. 1), p. 32 ff.

thou sentst forth the streams (*dhārā*) and slewest the son of the Dānu".¹ As was pointed out above, also Lüders ended by considering the possible identity of "der Himmelsquell im Felsen" with the Vala (p. 387, nn. 4 and 5).

4. The same generative and life-promoting water, however, was also believed to fall down from heaven as rain. This raises the fundamental question as to how this water was thought to ascend to heaven, a difficulty that to my knowledge has never been stated. This is particularly manifest in stanzas like II.24.4 "The well that has a rock for orifice and streams of "*madhu*", (the well) which Brahmanaspati split open with force, that all "sun-seers" have drunk; together they have poured down abundantly the spring of water".² There can be no doubt that this *āsmāsyā avatā* is identical with the Vala (e.g., Lüders, p. 387 n. 5).³

The answer to this question is twofold: 1) In the nocturnal aspect of the cosmos the cosmic waters form the night-time sky and are, accordingly, automatically above the earth. 2) In the day-time aspect the water is drawn from the spring in the earth up to the sky and then poured down. There was perhaps an additional idea that rain could fall down from the branches of the *Aśvattha soma-savana*, which reached into the third heaven (AS. V.4.3) and supported the heaven like a pillar. This possibility will not be considered here.

As for the night aspect—the only case for which the notion of a celestial ocean would seem firmly established—, it is not necessary to enter here into an ample discussion after my remarks in IIJ. 8 (1964), pp. 107ff. It may only be observed that the reconstruction there given of Varuṇa dwelling at the lower end of the world axis and supporting the Tree of Life is fully confirmed by later sources like Mhbh. V.96.6 crit. ed., where Nārada and Mātali, on their way to Varuṇa, descend into the underworld (*avagāhya tato bhūmim*),

¹ *ādardar ūtsam āsrjo vi khāni tvām arnavān badbadhānāṅ aramṇāḥ, mahāntam indra pārvaṭam vi yād vāḥ sṛjō vi dhārā dva dānavām han. Cf., e.g., IX.110.5 abhy-ābhi hi śrāvasā tatārdithō 'tsam nā kām cij janapānam ākṣitam.*

² *āsmāsyam avatām brāhmaṇas pātir mādhubdhāram abhi yām ōjasā 'tṛṇat, tām evā viśve papire svarḍṣo bahū sākām sisicur ūtsam udriṇam. Cf. Hillebrandt, Asia Major 1 (1924), p. 791, Lüders, p. 387. Geldner's translation "Sie schöpften allesamt reichlich von dem wasserspendenden Quell" is obviously wrong.*

³ Cf. PB. XIX.7.1 *asurāṇām vai valas tamasā prāvṛto 'śmāpidhānaś cāsīt. For āsmāpidhāna cf. RS. IV.28.5 ādardṛtam āpihitāny āsnā.*

where they find in the very centre (V.97.1 *nābhīsthāne*) the *nāgaloka* and its capital Pātāla. The same location under the Meru, that is, at the lower end of the world axis, is also found in *Kuvalayamālā*, par. 139 (p. 71, line 15, II J 1, p. 237 n. 6) and in Śāyaṇa's commentary on ŚB. I.4.1.37 (Weber's ed., p. 111). While Śeṣa supports the world axis from below (V.101.2, VII.69.48), he and Takṣaka surround Varuṇa (II.9.8). In the same way Śeṣa and Vāsuki are located at the lower end of the *jarjara* during the *ṣūrvaraṅga* of a dramatic performance (Bhar. NŚ I.94, 3.80).

All this is pretty well in agreement with the Rīgveda, where Varuṇa is said to dwell "at the origin of the rivers, with seven sisters, (himself) amidst (them)", to be "the creator of the primeval world" where "his seven" are. This world is referred to as "Varuṇa's fixed dwelling-place [= in the centre], he governs the seven" and in the most characteristic passage it is said: "He has created the first creation, who with his pillar kept both worlds asunder, as Aja (supports) the sky".¹

In the light of this evidence it can hardly be doubted that in the much-disputed stanza RS. I.24.7, in spite of the use of the word *stūpa*,² Varuṇa holds the roots of the inverted cosmic tree upwards, in accordance with *ūrdhvamūla* of the later tradition (TĀ. I.11.5, Kāth.Up. VI.1, Maitrī Up. VI.4, Bhagavadgītā 15.1). The idea that a *nyagrodha* could have been meant³, although still maintained as

¹ Cf. RS. VIII.41.2 *yāh śindhūnām ūpodayē sāptasvasā sā madhyamō* (see Lüders, p. 712), 41.4 *sā mātā pūrvyām padām tād vārunasya sāptyam sā hi gopā ivēryo*, 41.9 *vārunasya dhruvām sādah sā saptānām irajyati*, 41.10 *sā dhāma pūrvyām mame yā śkambhēna vi rōdasi ajō nā dyām ādhārayat*.

² *abudhnē rājā vāruṇo vānasyo 'rdhvām stūpaṃ dadate pūtādakṣah, nīcānā sthur upāri budhnā eṣām asme antār nīhitāh ketāvah syuh*. For *sthuḥ* as "genereller Injunktiv" see in general Karl Hoffmann, *Der Injunktiv im Veda*, p. 113ff. For *abudhnē* Renou, EVP. 7. p. 72, points to VIII.77.5 *abudhnēsu rājassu*. As for *stūpa*, both the later tradition and the words *upāri budhnā eṣām* (which must refer to the roots) point to the conclusion that the traditional renderings (Ludwig: "stamm", Grassmann: "Schopf", Hillebrandt and Geldner: "Krone", Renou, EVP. 5, p. 94: "aigrette") cannot be correct. Only the circumstance that the poet here expressed a mystery can account for the use of this word instead of *mūla*-, which had already found acceptance: III.30.17 *sahāmūla*, and further X.87.10 *mūla*, X.87.19 *sahāmūra*, VII.104.24, X.87.2, 14 *mūradeva*.

³ Geldner, *Vedische Studien I* (1889), pp. 113-115 and *Übersetzung I*, p. 25 n., L. von Schroeder, *Festgruss E. Kuhn* (1916), pp. 59ff., A. Coomaraswamy, *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society* 29 (1938), pp. 111-149, F. D. K. Bosch, *The Golden Germ* (1960), p. 65ff., R. Otto, e.g., *Varuṇa-Hymnen des Rīgveda* (1948), p. 25 n. 82.

late as 1960 by Renou, EVP. 8, p. 72f., is no longer discussible.¹ The idea of an inverted tree is well known from many mythologies.² So is also the identification of nocturnal sky and cosmic waters.³ If this sky represents the underworld in an upside-down position, the bowl at the foot of the world-tree (see p. 145, n. 2) must then be inverted and hang over its roots.

Leaving aside the old problem of the possible identity of this bowl and the moon⁴ (which is, in any case, not a problem of naïve realism but one of mythical equivalence) I can here confine myself to a reference to RS. V.85.3 "Varuṇa has poured out the cask, with its rim turned downwards, over heaven and earth and the intermediate space. Thereby the king sprinkles the soil of the whole world, as the rain (sprinkles) the barley".⁵ That the word *nīcīnabāra* here refers to the inverted cask on top of the world axis in the nocturnal sky may be argued on general mythological grounds. Whether, however, AS. IV.15.12 *dva nīcīr apāḥ sṛja*, words with which Varuṇa is addressed, must in an analogous way be interpreted as "let flow the waters that are hanging downwards" is questionable: RS. V.83.7 does not plead in favour of this translation. On the other hand, our interpretation of V.85.3 may furnish the definitive explanation of the so-called "bell-shaped" or "lotus" capital of Indian art as a cosmic symbol.⁶

5. More important in the Rigveda is the idea that one or more

¹ See in particular Paul Thieme, *Untersuchungen zur Wortkunde und Auslegung des Rigveda* (Hallische Monographien 7, 1949), p. 68 ff. and further my remarks in Bijdr. TLV 107 (1951), pp. 79-83.

² Cf. e.g. Uno Holmberg (Harva), *Der Baum des Lebens* (Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae, series B, vol. XVI), Helsinki 1922-23, pp. 17, 59, etc., H. Bergema, *De Boom des Levens in Schrift en Historie* (Hilversum, 1938), p. 275 n. 116, E. Kagarow, *Der umgekehrte Schamanenbaum*, in Archiv für Religionswissenschaft 1929, p. 183 f., M. Eliade, *Traité d'histoire des Religions* (1953), p. 239 ff. and p. 281 (references), *Le chamanisme* (1951), p. 244 ff. (references on p. 245 n. 1), E. A. S. Butterworth, *The Tree of Life at the Navel of the Earth*, pp. 16, 66.

³ Cf., e.g., W. B. Kristensen, *Leven uit den Dood*, p. 14 f., *Symbol en Werkelijkheid*, p. 180, *Verzamelde Bijdragen tot kennis der antieke Godsdiensten*, p. 279.

⁴ Cf., e.g., Oldenberg, *Kleine Schriften*, p. 703, Hillebrandt, *Ved. Myth.* I², pp. 326, 386 f., Butterworth, *The Tree of Life*, p. 101 ff.

⁵ *nīcīnabāraṃ vāruṇaḥ kāvandham prā sasarja rōdasi antārikṣam, tēna viśvasya bhūvanasya rājā yāvanā nā vṛṣṭir vy ānatti bhūma.*

⁶ For the origin of the bell-shaped capital see E. Havell, *A Handbook of Indian Art* (1920/1927), p. 41, G. J. Held, *The Mahabharata* (1935), p. 208, F. D. K. Bosch, *The Golden Germ* (1960), p. 156 f., Butterworth, *The Tree of Life*, pp. 104 (Sumer), 109.

gods draw water from a souree and then tilt the bucket. This is clearly expressed in the Parjanya-hymn V.83.8cd "Draw thou (*úd acā!*) the large bucket, pour it out. Let the rivulets, set free, run forward".¹ The two stages are most clearly distinguished in I.85.10 and 11: *ūrdhvām nunudre 'vatām tá ójasā dādṛhāṇām cid bibhidur ví párvatam* "They [the Maruts] pushed the source upward with force: they pierced the mountain although it was strong" and *jihmām nunudre 'vatām táyā diśā 'siñcann útsam gótamāya tṛṣṇāje* "They tilted the well in that direction (?) (and) poured out the spring for the thirsty Gotama". Lüders, p. 386 n. 1, who took the two expressions as synonyms, misinterpreted *ūrdhvām nud-* as "nach oben stoßen", "umdrehen".

In I.88.4 it is the Gotamas who, apparently in a rain magic, push up the receptacle: "For days they [the Maruts], greedy, have been circling round about this rain-making divine poem. The Gotamas, formulating their magic incantation, pushed up the pail by means of their songs, for drinking".² The only object of the priests was to cause the water to ascend to heaven. Thereafter, it was the task of the Maruts to pour down the rain "for drinking". The word *jihmā* in *jihmābāra*³ was apparently a stereotyped term for the tilting of the pail, cf. I.116.9 *pārā 'vatām nāsatyā 'nudethām uccābudhnam cakrathur jihmābāram* "You, O Nāsatyas, have pushed away the source, you made its bottom turned upwards and its brim tilted".⁴ There is, it seems, no appreciable difference in meaning with *nīcīna-bāra* in VIII.72.10 *siñcānti nāmasā 'vaiśīm uccācakram párijmānam*,

¹ *mahāntam kósam úd acā ni śiñca syāndantām kulyā viśitāḥ purástāt*. The relation of the preceding stanza 7c *dṛtīm sú karṣa viśitam nyāñcam* to the one quoted is not clear. Lüders, p. 381, is probably right in taking *dṛti* and *kósa* as two different objects. See further, e.g., Kaegi, *Hundert Lieder*, p. 97, Hillebrandt, *Lieder aus dem Rgveda*, p. 70, Karl Hoffmann, *Der Infektiv im Veda*, p. 261, etc.

² *āhāni gṛāhrāḥ páry ā va āgur imām dhiyam vārkāryām ca devīm, brāhma kṛvānto gótamāso arkaḥ ūrdhvām nunudra utsadhim pibadhyai*.

³ The meaning "brim" for *-bāra* according to Geldner; see further Wackernagel-Debrunner, KZ. 67 (1942), p. 171 [= Wackernagel, *Kleine Schriften*, p. 387].

⁴ There remains a crux in VIII.40.5 *yā sapṭābudhnam arṇavām jihmābāram aporutā(h)* "(Indra and Agni) who open the stream with seven bottoms and with tilted brim", where, apart from the mythical speculations underlying *sapṭābudhna*, the notion of opening the source in the mountain would seem incompatible with that of tilting a bucket (which, moreover, is not Indra's task, cf. VIII.72.8). The predilection for compounds with *sapṭā-* in this group of hymns should be noted, cf. 39.8 *sapṭāmānuṣa*, 41.2 *sapṭāsvasā*, 9 *sā sapṭānām irajyati*.

nīcīnabāram ākṣitam "They [the *hotṛs*] pour out with obeisance the inexhaustible source that goes round (?) with its bottom ¹ upwards (and) its rim downwards".

Like Parjanya, the Maruts are said to draw the rain-water, cf. RS. V.55.5 *ūd īrayathā marutaḥ samudratō yūyām vṛṣṭīm varṣayathā puriṣiṇaḥ*, AS. IV.15.5 *ūd īrayata marutaḥ samudratās*, IV.27.4 *apāḥ samudrād divam ūd vahanti*, Kauś.S.III.3 *indrapraśiṣṭā varuṇa-prasūtā āpaḥ samudrād divam ud vahanti* (see Lüders, p. 104f.). The term *samudrā* was used in Vedic times both for the oceans that surrounded the earth in the mythical cosmology and for the cosmic waters under the earth, as is shown by the phrase *hṛdya samudrā* (IIJ 8, p. 125). In its last connotation it was synonymous with *avatā*. The cosmological conception on which these passages are based is, accordingly, quite the same as that underlying the Varuṇa-hymn V.85.3, quoted above, and Lüders (p. 719) was wrong in assigning them to "der späteren, mehr naturalistisch gerichteten Anschauung über die Regententstehung", however understandable this conclusion was on the basis of his premises. The principal difference between the Marut-passages and the Varuṇa-hymn is that in the latter we are concerned with the nocturnal sky, which was identical with the cosmic waters. That is why Varuṇa did not need to draw the water before causing the rain to fall down on earth: the *kāvandha* was, indeed, immediately at his disposal. This idea is expressed with all desirable clearness in I.161.14 "Through the sky go the Maruts, on earth goes Agni, the Wind goes here through the air, Varuṇa goes through the waters, the *samudras* (*adbhīr yāti vāruṇaḥ samudraiḥ*)".

Geldner has been the first to recognize that the verb *ā cyāvayati*, apart from its being used in the general sense "to draw towards oneself", was also a technical term for the drawing of the (subterraneous) water. As such it is more currently used than *ūd acati*, and is more unequivocal than terms like *duh* (e.g., VIII. 1.10 *kāvandham udrīnam duduhre pṛśnayo*), which will, therefore, here be left out of account. The term *ā cyāvayati* has been curiously misunderstood: Ludwig rendered it by "beschleunigen, stürzen, her(an)eilen machen", Grassmann: "ausgiessen, ergiessen, bewegen, herziehen" (*Wörterbuch*: "ausschütteln, ausgiessen"), Max Müller, SBE

¹ *cakra* "den untern rand des gefäßes", Ludwig, vol. IV, p. 387. It seems here to be a synonym of *budhnā*, although in the late hymn X.101.7 *avatām āśmacakram* looks rather like a variation of II.24.4 *āśmāsyam avatām*.

XXXII: "to shake, shake down", Lüders (p. 380): "herabfallen machen", Renou, EVP. 10, pp. 29, 36: "amener, attirer vers-nous-le-mettant-en-branle" (but cf. p. 93 at the bottom!). Cf. also Hillebrandt, Asia Major 1 (1924), pp. 789-791, who curiously disregarded the specific meaning of *ā* in *ā cyāvayati*, which differentiates it from *cyāvayati* and *prā cyāvayati*. Since, as a result, the stanzas concerned have mostly been misunderstood, they are here cited with a translation. For considerations of space all comments have been left aside.

VIII.72.8 *ā daśābhir vivāsvata indraḥ kōśam acucyavīt, khēdayā trivṛtā divāḥ* "With the ten (fingers? Geldner) of Vivasvat Indra has pulled up the heavenly bucket, with a threefold hammer (?)"

V.53.6 *ā yān nāraḥ sudānāvo dadāśūṣe divāḥ kōśam ācucyavuh, vi parjānyam srjanti rōdasī ānu dhānvanā yanti vṛṣṭāyah* "The heavenly bucket which the heroes, rich in water,¹ have pulled up for their worshipper, that "parjanya" they pour out over the two worlds; the rains are going over the dry soil."

V.59.8 *ācucyavur divyām kōśam etā ṛṣe rudrāsya marūto grṇānāḥ* "These Maruts, (sons) of Rudra, have pulled up, O seer, the heavenly bucket while they were praised."

X.42.2 *kōśam nā pūrṇām vāsunā nyṛṣṭam ā cyāvaya maghadéyāya śūram* "Draw the hero [= Indra] like a full bucket, crammed with goods,² for the giving of presents."

IV.17.16 *gavyānta indram sakhyāya viprā aśvāyānto vṛṣaṇam vājāyantah, janīyānto janidām dksitotim ā cyāvayāmo 'vatē nā kōśam* "Desiring cattle we, the priests, draw Indra towards us for an alliance, desiring horses and the prize (him), the bull; desiring wives (him), the giver of wives, as (we pull up) a bucket in the well."

In the last two stanzas it is quite clear that "to pull up (a bucket)" is only a specialized use of "to draw towards oneself" in, e.g., X.101.12 *ā cyāvayo 'tāye*, VIII.92.7 *ā cyāvayasy ūtāye*. Cf. IV.32.18 *sahāsrā te satā vayām gāvām ā cyāvayāmasi*.

6. In conclusion it may be stated that when the Maruts are said to milk the *ūtsa* (I.64.6, VIII.7.16), or when Indra causes the udder of the mountain to flow (V.32.2), the *ūtsa* and *ūdhar* refer primarily to the cosmic water in Varuṇa's realm under the earth, where, at

¹ For *dānu* see the references in Hist. Rel. 10, p. 122 n. 61. Cf. I.79.3 *dānur asmā ūparā pinvate divāḥ* (Lüders, p. 121 n. 2).

² Geldner's translation "den mit Gut beladenen Helden" is obviously wrong. Cf. IV.28.6, X.108.7, II.16.7, IX.97.44, AS. IX.4.3.

the lower end of the world axis, the *amṛta* is located as late as Mahābhārata V.97.4 crit.ed. The circumstance that these waters are only mentioned in the most recent parts of the Rigveda (Lüders, p. 121f.) is due to the fact that the family collections were not concerned with this aspect. When this *útsa* is called "thundering" (I.64.6), its water is meant after it has been drawn up to heaven. For the same reason the *údhar párvatasya* could also be referred to as *údhar divyám* (IX.107.5, X.100.11), *údhar divyāni* (e.g., I.64.5). See also Lüders, p. 389ff.

If the preceding interpretation is correct, it must be concluded that (apart from the identity of Varuṇa's nocturnal śky with the cosmic waters) these passages do not confirm the theory of a celestial ocean.¹ However, so long as the fundamental problem of the *mythological* (not cosmological!) meaning of the "third heaven", and the background of its partial identity with the primeval or nether world is not entirely clarified, no final judgment on the "celestial ocean" in the Rigveda would seem possible.

Leiden.

Cf., e.g., Bergaigne, *La religion védique*, passim (see Index, III, p. 348), Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 85, W. Neisser, *Zum Wörterbuch des Rgveda* I (1924), pp. 57-59, H. Lommel, *Asiatica*, p. 408f., Lüders, p. 111 ff. "Der Himmelsozean" (but see Karl Hoffmann, OLZ. 1954, col. 391).

7. THE ANCIENT ARYAN VERBAL CONTEST

1. There is a considerable difference of opinion nowadays about the social and cultural background of the Rigvedic poetry. In Geldner's Rigveda-translation and in Renou's recent studies which are based on it¹ there is a tendency to overemphasize the importance of literary contests, for which the poems are thought to be designed. Thieme, in a fundamental discussion of this trend in modern Vedic studies, not only noted "an unmistakable tendency to secularize the RV", but also stated to "hear in some renderings of Geldner's overtones of their own that call to mind unfortunate associations with the Nuremberg master-singers and the minnesingers' tournament of song on the Wartburg".² The following studies, devoted to a social as well as religious phenomenon, may contribute to correcting the perspective and to eliminating some views about the Vedic society that are still materially based on the theories of the *Vedische Studien*. The influence of these theories is indeed still perceptible in Geldner's latest interpretation of the Rigveda.

In point of fact, the duels between poets may rather be regarded as a special instance of a more general type of contest, which included unpoetical verbal contests as well as chariot races, combats, etc. Here however a serious methodological difficulty faces us. The question naturally arises on which occasions these contests may have taken place. Thieme, who is disinclined to accept the theory of such contests at all, stresses the necessity of looking for a serious, genuinely religious content in the Rigvedic hymns.³ I quite agree with him but, while the contests

¹ Karl Friedrich Geldner, *Der Rig-Veda aus dem Sanskrit ins Deutsche übersetzt* (Harvard Oriental Series, vols. 33-36, 1951-1957); L. Renou, *Études védiques et pāṇinéennes*, I (Paris 1955), p. 1 ff.

² *JAOS*, 77 (1957), pp. 53 and 56. Cf. also H. P. Schmidt, *ZDMG*, 109 (1959), p. 446.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

are here considered (in contradistinction to Geldner's interpretation) as a social phenomenon of an essentially religious character, it is impossible to give, within the compass of an article, an adequate picture of the religious side of the problem. Since this would require a discussion of the total system of Vedic mythological thought, and since such preliminaries would outgrow the study proper, we are compelled to confine ourselves to a rough sketch of the religious background, to delineating a mere framework of religious notions which are presupposed in the present article but for which no justification can be attempted here. Even the more extensive treatment of a single issue, viz. the connection of Uṣas with the new year's day, cannot therefore have more than an *illustrative* function. In view of Renou's recent treatment of this subject,⁴ a somewhat more detailed discussion seemed required but this point, too, will finally have to be considered within the context of the *whole* Rigvedic mythology. Unattractive though this method of treatment may be, it appeared inevitable, as it was plainly impossible to leave the religious aspect entirely out of consideration. But also the social aspect had to be restricted to a discussion of the debate, while other parallel phenomena such as the chariot races could only be mentioned in passing, when they could throw some light on the word-duels. In conclusion it may be observed that as a rule the texts have been quoted without a translation. For those who are already seriously handicapped by having to express their thoughts in a foreign language, Lüders' demand that every quotation should be translated⁵ is quite impossible to carry out. The German translation that has been added for a quick orientation wherever this seemed required is by Geldner, unless otherwise stated.

2. It has long been recognized by several students of Vedic mythology that the Rigvedic myth of Indra's combat with the dragon Vṛtra has no bearing on natural phenomena such as thunderclouds and rain, but represents an Aryan myth of creation.⁶ Indra slays with his *vájra* the power of resistance (*vṛtrá-*) of the inert Chaos, which power is conceived as residing on the primordial hill that floats on the surface of the cosmic Waters. Indra, while slaying this *vṛtrá-*, at the same time splits the hill,

⁴ See *Etudes védiques*, III (1957), p. 1 ff.

⁵ Lüders, *Varuṇa*, II (1959), *Vorwort des Herausgebers*, p. VIII.

⁶ Cf. W. Norman Brown, "The Creation Myth of the Rig Veda", *JAOS*, 62 (1942), p. 85 ff.; Kuiper, *Museum*, 52 (1947), p. 199 f., *Mededelingen Kon. Ned. Akad. Wet.*, NR. 13/7 (1950), p. 174, 14/5 (1951), p. 19 f., *Bijdragen Kon. Instituut*, 107 (1951), pp. 72, 76; Lüders, *Varuṇa*, I (1951), p. 183 ff.

which is now riveted to the bottom of the Waters, and Fire and Water (*Agni-Sūrya* and *Āpaḥ-Sóma*) are forced to leave the undifferentiated world of inertia and to join the ranks of the heavenly Gods (RS. X. 124.2,6). Indra further separates by the same Vṛtra-slaying Heaven from Earth, by which act a cosmic dualism of upper world and nether world (represented by Devas and Asuras-Dānavas respectively) is constituted. To Varuṇa, the ancient god of the waters of Chaos, a new function is now assigned as guardian of the cosmic law (*ṛtá-*), which remains hidden in the nether world (e.g. RS. V. 62.1). As a result of this process of differentiation, the undifferentiated Chaos now constitutes itself as a nether world in opposition to the upper world, but as such continues to be the "older" world with its "older" gods, in contrast with the younger dynasty of the heavenly Gods (*devás*), whom KS. XXVII. 9 (p. 148,16 ff.) calls *ānujāvaratara-* "younger brothers" (read *anu-*?). In this process of creation (as we may conveniently call Indra's act notwithstanding its predominantly demiurgical character) the goods of life, symbolized by Agni and Soma, were for the first time brought to light from the nether world. According to Vedic mythology, accordingly, Fire and Water have been released from the power of Inertia, the cosmic regressive force, that lay on the hill (*giri-*, *párvata-*) and kept the aperture of the nether world closed (see p. 249). This myth is apparently an inheritance from the primitive Indo-Iranian religion. A different version is found in the archaic myth of the Churning of the Ocean, according to which the goods have been won directly from the depths of the Ocean (i.e. the cosmic Waters).

The wide-spread conception of time as a cyclical process is also met with in India. This implies that the beginning of every new year was conceived as a new cosmic start and, consequently, that at the end of every year the cosmos returned to its point of departure, the undifferentiated state of the Chaos, to be reborn. Direct indications for this last conception, it is true, are not found in Vedic literature: from the South Indian Poṅgal festival, during which the undifferentiated state of the cosmos is imitated and re-enacted in social life by a temporary abolishment of all social differences,⁷ and from parallels that could be adduced

⁷ See the references in J. J. Meyer, *Trilogie altindischer Mächte und Feste der Vegetation*, III, p. 122. The time at which the new year was celebrated seems to have varied in later periods. See Macdonell-Keith, *Vedic Index*, II, p. 157; Hillebrandt, *Ved. Mythologie*, I², p. 31, II², p. 177; Caland's note on his translation of PB.V.9.1, H. P. Schmidt, *Vrata*, p. 36 n. 46; Heesterman, *The ancient Indian Royal Consecration*, p. 7f. For further references see especially C. d'Onofrio, *Studi e Materiali di Storia delle*

from other religions, it might be argued that similar ideas are likely to have been current among the Vedic Indians, but this is a hypothesis. That they were much concerned with this period is however beyond doubt. Indra's mythical exploit comprises the winning of the Sun.⁸ He is therefore celebrated in the hymns as *svarjī-* "winner of the sun", *svarḍś-* "seeing the sun", *svārpati-* "lord of the sun", *svārvat-* "possessing the sun", *svarvid-* "finding the sun", *svarṣā-* "winning the sun". On the other hand, the priests are said to be longing for the sun (*svaryávaḥ... viprāḥ... kuśikāsaḥ* III. 30.20), men invoke Indra's aid and are helped in races "which have the sun as their prize", e.g. I. 130.8 *indraḥ samātsu yājamānam āryam prāvad... svārmīlheṣv ājīṣu* VIII. 68.5 *svārmīlheṣu yām nárah | nānā hávanta útāye*, I. 63.6 (*tvām...*) *svārmīlhe nára ājā havante*. Now we know from the Vājapeya ritual that chariot races *can* have a ritual character⁹ and in the passages quoted we have no reason to take with Geldner the word *ājī-* in the sense "Kampf" instead of "race", which is its normal meaning. Ritual races are also suggested by such phrases as IX. 65.11 *svarḍśam | hinvé vājeṣu vājīnam*: just as the chariot of the gods is called "sun-finding" (VII. 67.3 *svarvidā vásumatā ráthena*), so the horse that is the winner in the race can be considered a "sun-finder". In the Avesta the same (or nearly the same) epithet is also attributed to Yima, who was *hvarə.darəsō mašyānəm* (Y. 9.4). The many *maṅgalavacāmsi* for "race-horse" in the Rigvedic language should be noted in this connection.¹⁰

What was the religious significance of these "races that had the sun as their prize", of this "acquiring of the sun"? The poets tell us that Indra's primordial act was continuously repeated. Cf. e.g. VI. 17.8 *ádha tvá víśve purá indra devá ékaṁ tavásaṁ dadhire bhārāya | ádevo yád abhy aúhiṣṭa deván svārṣātā vṛṇata indram átra* "Da stellten dich allein, den Starken, alle Götter an die Spitze, um (den Sieg) zu gewinnen, o Indra; als der Ungott sich über die Götter überhob, da erwählen sie im Kampf

Religioni, 24/25 (1953/1954), p. 141 f. (cf. Lommel, *Der arische Kriegsgott*, pp. 51-70), for the data about ancient Iran cf. e.g. Widengren, *Religionens Värld*, pp. 201-209, *Numen*, I, p. 37 ff. (etc.), Tavadia, *Ein alter Feuerritus bei den Zoroastriern in Iran*, ARW, 36 (1939), pp. 256-276.

⁸ Cf. Hillebrandt, *Ved. Myth.*, II, p. 182, n. 1.

⁹ See Weber, *Sitzungsber. Berl. Akad.*, 39 (1892), p. 787 ff.; Hillebrandt, *Ved. Myth.*, I, p. 484; Heesterman, *op. c.*, p. 127 ff.

¹⁰ Auspicious terms for the race horse are *āśú-*, *vājī-* (cf. *vājino vājajito vājāṁ sariśyāntaḥ* VS. 9.9!), probably also *ātya-* (lit. "by-passing", cf. *tād dhāvato 'nyān āty eti tiṣṭhat* VS. 40.4, *ati-sr-* JB. II. 128⁶, *āty asti anyān* RS VII. 1.14), and *vyāti-* (cf. *vy-ati-gam-*, etc.).

um die Sonne den Indra". While the first two *pādas* relate a mythical event (perfect tense), the third and fourth refer to a recent assault of the demon (aorist) and the new decision of the gods (present tense), now that the sun must be won again. This, as well as the races for sun-winning, cannot refer but to one definite period of the year, viz. the winter solstice. Cf. p. 269 and n. 7. If this is true, the question must be raised whether also other expressions of the Vedic language may perhaps have a far more concrete meaning than Geldner's translation attributes to them. The poets frequently pray for deliverance from anxiety (*ānhas-*). Now *ānhasaspati-* is the name of an intercalary month in VS. 7.30, 21.31, which allows us to infer that *ānhas-* could refer to the end of the year. The association of *ānhas-* and *tāmas-* "darkness" (see p. 234) points to the same conclusion. Only in passing can attention be drawn to other words that possibly refer to the same period, e.g. *parivatsaré*,¹¹ *rātrī pāritakmyā*,¹² *pārya*,¹³ etc.

If from the facts mentioned we draw the general conclusion that some at least of the hymns to Indra concern the critical period of transition from the old to the new year, and some at least of the chariot races (e.g. the *svārmīlha- ājī-*) must have taken place at that time, we must assume that men tried to assist Indra in his fight against Death and Darkness by their ritual. Now similar rites are known from the Mahāvratā-ceremony, at which an Ārya (Vaiśya) and a Śūdra had to fight a ritual combat over a white piece of leather representing the sun, and from the ceremonial buying of the Soma (*Somakráyaṇa-*) as a preliminary to the Soma-sacrifice. In such circumstances the powers of the nether world were personified by a certain social group, the Śūdras, while the *āryas* acted as the representatives of Indra and the heavenly Gods.

Now one of the technical words for Indra's divine gifts is *maghá-*, e.g. IV. 17.8 *hántā yó vṛtrám sánitotá vájam dātā magháni maghāvā surádhāḥ* "der Töter des Vṛtra und der Gewinner der Beute ist, der Gaben schenkt, der Freigebige, Belohnende". On the other hand *maghāvan-*, Indra's current epithet, is also a title given to liberal patrons, e.g. X. 81.6 *ihá 'smákam maghāvā sūrír astu*. This suggests an equation of Indra and these lords, who in the social sphere may have personified him in his function of present-giving (*maghātti-*). Hence, when a lord gives a portion

¹¹ Hillebrandt, *op. c.*, I, p. 30, n. 3.

¹² Hillebrandt, *op. c.*, II, p. 253 f.; Renou, *Etudes sur le vocabulaire du RV*, I, p. 42 f.; etc.

¹³ See e.g. Mayrhofer, *Kurzgef. etym. Wörterb.*, II, p. 258; Abaev, *Ėtimologičeskij slovar' osetinskogo jazyka*, I, p. 422.

of the wealth he has won in a contest (*vāja-*) to a poet, this portion is termed the *maghā-*. This is apparently the concrete meaning of I. 11.3 *pūrvā indrasya rātāyo nā vi dasyanty ūtāyaḥ / yādī vājasya gómata stotṛbhyo māmhate maghām*, where the human *maghāvan-* is identified with the divine one. If however our conclusion is correct that the human *maghāvan-* personifies Indra, the question arises whether it is probable that persons could have impersonated their god and re-enacted his creative act at any other time but during festivals of a definite character, which then must have celebrated the god's primordial act.

Into this context of present-giving and contests would also fit the word-contests. Held has already pointed out that munificence itself can be a form of contest¹⁴ and the whole complex would undoubtedly support the well-known theories about a potlatch-festival in the oldest strata of Indo-Aryan civilization. Perhaps it will at some time be possible to prove such a theory beyond doubt. Anyway, detailed studies of separate aspects, like the one here undertaken, will have to clear the way for such a demonstration. From such future studies of a more comprehensive character there may finally emerge a conclusion of fundamental importance for an adequate appreciation of the Rigveda as a whole, and of its mythology in particular. Sometimes the possibility has already been contemplated that Indra had not really such a predominant position in the Vedic pantheon as the Rigveda suggests, but the theories propounded to explain Indra's role in the Rigvedic hymns do not carry conviction.¹⁵ It may be anticipated, however, that a fuller appreciation of the cardinal importance of the cosmogonical myth will give us a better insight into the true religious character of Vedic mythology and will ultimately result in a full recognition of the theory which Hillebrandt has defended against an overwhelming opposition (see *Vedische Mythologie*, I², p. 10 n. 2). Indeed, if it can be definitively proved that the oldest nucleus of the Rigveda was a textbook for the new year ritual, this will account for the very one-sided picture of the Vedic pantheon and its mythology which the Rigveda provides us, for the endlessly repeated references to Indra's fight with Vṛtra, and for the hymns to Agni and Uṣas, if these may be taken to celebrate the reappearance of the sunlight after a period of winter darkness. Indirectly such a view of the character of the Rigvedic family collections might also throw some new light on their testimony regarding such a god as Varuṇa:

¹⁴ G. J. Held, *The Mahabharata, An ethnological Study* (thesis Leiden, 1935), p. 243 ff. (following Hubert and Mauss).

¹⁵ See, e.g., G. Dumézil, *Tarpeia*, p. 52 ff.

if it was too dangerous in this period of cosmic *ānhas-* to mention Death, then the ominous God, and his degradation as a result of Indra's victory (RS. X. 124.5), could only be spoken of in the most euphemistic terms during this time.¹⁶ Cf. IV. 1. 2-5 with Geldner's note!

3. *Uṣas* and the New Year.

One of the fundamental questions for our understanding of the character of the Rigveda is, how we must conceive the nature of the Goddess Dawn (*Uṣas*). Following Ludwig, Hillebrandt has defended the thesis that the twenty hymns to *Uṣas* do not worship the dawn of every new day but especially the first dawn of the new year.¹⁷ A similar view, based on a comparison with the Old Germanic Ostara and the Lettish Uhsing, was taken by von Schroeder.¹⁸ Most scholars however have rejected it. Keith objects that Hillebrandt's theory "is wholly unsupported by any evidence, and depends on a theory of the Rigvedic view of the year that is arbitrary".¹⁹ Oldenberg points to the lack of clear references to the beginning of the new year and controverts Hillebrandt's arguments based on the use of *Uṣas*-hymns to inaugurate the Agniṣṭoma in spring, and on a possible connection of *Uṣas* with the Ekāṣṭakā (which is the night, out of which both Indra and the new year are said to be born; AthS. III. 10.12).²⁰ Foy combated Hillebrandt's view that RS. VII. 80 is a "Neujahrslied" and his arguments were accepted by Oldenberg and Renou.²¹ Also Renou does not see sufficient indications for Hillebrandt's theory: "ceci reste une hypothèse".²²

Now, every theory about *Uṣas* must needs be a hypothesis. But just here we are confronted with the real methodological difficulty, which has never been stated explicitly. When reading Foy's important criticisms one soon recognizes that the basic difference of opinion is ultimately rooted in a different approach to the Vedic hymns as religious poetry. When we try to defend again Hillebrandt's theory, this is mainly because the current view, though seemingly prompted by common sense, fails to

¹⁶ See III, III, p. 211.

¹⁷ See Ludwig, *Rgveda*, IV, p. XI, VI, p. 173 a; Hillebrandt, *Ved. Mythologie*, I², p. 28 ff.

¹⁸ L. von Schroeder, *Arische Religion*, II, pp. 16, 58 f, 205.

¹⁹ A. B. Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, p. 121 f. Hillebrandt's theory was only accepted by G. Montesi, *Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni*, 28/1 (1957), p. 26 (to which M. Molé kindly drew my attention after this study had been written).

²⁰ Oldenberg, *Religion des Veda*, p. 243 n. 1.

²¹ Oldenberg, *Noten*; Renou, *Etudes védiques et pāṇinéennes*, III, p. 101.

²² Renou, *Et. véd. et pāṇ.*, III, pp. 6, 52, 101.

explain far too many aspects of Uṣas, when taken not as a piece of poetic imagery but as a religious reality. The presuppositions from which earlier scholars tacitly started are strikingly illustrated by the words "diese so durchsichtigen Texte", which once slipped from Oldenberg's pen. These scholars certainly did not overlook the difficulties; rather they did not exist to them. Since the hymns seemed perfectly clear, no need of any theory (which would have had to be a "hypothesis") was felt and Hillebrandt's could only be regarded as superfluous. So the convincing power of any argumentation, however detailed, is ultimately limited by the existence of two different basic attitudes. A single instance may illustrate this difficulty. In each of the twenty Rigvedic hymns to Uṣas the most prominent feature is the prayer for wealth and progeny. Now it would seem far from self-evident that the dawn of a new day should be implored to bestow wealth. The fact that, apart from occasional references to the *dakṣiṇās* given in the early morning,²³ no serious attempt has been made to account for this remarkable association of the dawn with the giving of presents is probably due to the implicit conviction that this trait forms part of a poetical imagery, which induced the Vedic poets to address any god with prayers for wealth and progeny. As a result of this conviction any attempt to understand the poets' religious attitude towards their gods must seem useless and runs the risk of being denounced as "reconstructions aléatoires".²⁴ On the other hand, it cannot be denied that the light of Uṣas "n'est autre que la reprise de la lumière originelle".²⁵ Indeed, it is our conviction that the true nature of Uṣas cannot be really understood unless we take the cosmogonical aspect into consideration. In the following pages we shall point out some aspects of Uṣas which seem to us not sufficiently explained by the hypothesis that the dawn of every day could be addressed in the way the Rigvedic poets address Uṣas. Our investigation is based on the principle that the hymns as religious poetry deserve to be taken seriously and that, whatever may have been the role of the poetical technique, it is our task to understand and explain those associations which to the Vedic poet were fundamental. We shall not enter into such technical problems as the connection of the Rigveda with the *devayāna* or *uttarāyana*. Cf. VII. 76.2 *prā me pānthā devayānā adṛśran*, X. 18.1 *pārehi pānthām yās te svā itaro devayānāt*, AB. IV. 14.5

²³ Geldner, note ad X. 107.1, Thieme, *Der Fremdling im RV.*, p. 27 (but see now Heesterman, *IJJ*, III, p. 255, n. 36 and cf. e.g. JB. II. 130).

²⁴ Renou, *Et. véd.*, I, p. 23 n. 2.

²⁵ Renou, *Et. véd.*, III, p. 83; cf. p. 73.

yo vai saṁvatsarasyā 'varodhanam codrodhanam ca veda, sa vai svasti saṁvatsarasya pāram āsnute, etc.²⁶

A. Cosmic aspects

The importance of Uṣas in the cosmic process is apparent from the fact that the two representatives of the opposite powers of light and darkness (or upper and nether world) are *uśás-* and *nákta-* (*Uśásānákīā*, *Náktośásā*). Still the role of Uṣas in the cosmogony is hardly ever mentioned. There is a reference to a (first?) Uṣas, through whom the gods arranged the works(?) of the Ṛbhus (IV. 51.6 *kvā svid āsān katamā purāṇī yáyā vidhānā vidadhūr ṛbhūnām*), and to the early awakening of Uṣas prior to the whole creation in I. 123.2 *pūrvā víśvasmād bhūvanād abodhi jáyantī vājam brhatī sánutī* "Früher als die ganze Welt ist die Hohe erwacht, siegend, den Preis erringend". Renou compares *ápūrvyā* I. 46.1. Her role as a *jáyantī* deserves notice (see below).

Uṣas is born from the darkness of the nether world. Some passages, taken in themselves, might seem simply to refer to the preceding night, but the frequent references in others to the "firm rock" (i.e. the primordial hill opened by Indra) suggest that also in the first group the birth of Uṣas was conceived as a reiteration of the cosmogonical process. Cf. I. 123.1 *kṛṣṇād úd asthād aryā víhāyāḥ*, 9 *śukrá kṛṣṇād ajaniṣṭa śvitīcī* (otherwise I. 113.1 *citrāḥ praketo ajaniṣṭa vibhvā*), IV. 51.1 *támaso vayúnāvad asthāt*. While she arises, the Paṇis must keep sleeping in this darkness²⁷, cf. IV. 51.3 *acitré antāḥ paṇāyaḥ sasantv ābudhyamānās támaso vímadhye*, I. 124.10 *ābudhyamānāḥ paṇāyaḥ sasantu*. This is not contradicted by the passages which state Uṣas to come from the sky, e.g. I. 49.1 *úšo bhadrébhīr ā gahi divás cid rocanād ādhi*), or to be the daughter of Heaven (*duhitā divāḥ* passim, VII. 75.1 *divijāḥ*, VI. 65.1 *divojāḥ*). The most fundamental misunderstandings about Vedic mythology have arisen from the fact that the mythical identity of the *nocturnal* sky with the nether world has scarcely ever been clearly stated.²⁸ The parallelism between, e.g., I. 48.15 *úšo yád adyā bhānúnā ví dvārāv ṛnāvo divāḥ* and IV. 51.2 *vy ā vrajāsya támaso dvāro 'chāntīr avrañ chūcayaḥ pāvakāḥ* (cf. III. 5.1), IV. 52.6 *vy āvar jyótiṣā támaḥ*, VII. 75.1 *āpa drūhas táma āvar ājuṣṭam*, VII. 79.4 *ví dr̥hāsya dúro ádrer aur̥ṇoḥ* is not accidental: it rests on the identity of *dvārā divāḥ* and *vrajāsya dvārā*, *dúro ádreḥ*.

²⁶ Hillebrandt, *Ved. Myth.*, I², p. 33. Rigvedic references to the winter solstice are according to Hillebrandt I. 61.15, V. 29.5, X. 171.4; 179.2 ("But none of these passages are conclusive", *Vedic Index*, II, p. 467, n. 22).

²⁷ "ténèbres éternelles", Renou, *op. c.*, III, p. 73.

²⁸ See *Bijdragen Kon. Instituut*, 107 (1951), p. 81 f.

The nether world (that is, the subterranean waters and the nocturnal sky) is Varuṇa's realm and here is the seat of Ṛta, which is "hidden where they unharness the horses of the Sun" (RS. V. 62.1). Now Uṣas, the kinswoman of Varuṇa (I. 123.5), is born from Ṛta (*rtejāh* I. 118.12) and is said to awake from Ṛta's abode, cf. IV. 51.8 *ṛtāsya devīh sādaso budhānā gāvān nā sārgā uśāso jarante*. This nether world was enclosed in the primordial hill, the firm rock which Indra has opened. So Indra is said to have engendered Uṣas and the Sun, cf. II. 12.7 *yāh sūryam yā uśāsam jajāna yō apām netā*, II. 21.4 *indrah suyajñā uśāsaḥ svār janat*, etc.²⁹ As in the parallel cases of Agni and Soma, however, the victorious power which overcomes that of Darkness is also assigned to Uṣas herself, cf. *jāyantī, vājam ... sánutri* I. 123.2. She, who dwells on the surface of the mountain (*adrisānu-* VI. 65.5), has opened the doors of the firm rock: VII. 79.4 *vī dṛghāsya dúro ádrer aurnoh*, VII. 75.7 *rujád dṛghāni dádad usṛtyānām*. Cf. also IV. 51.2 *ásthur u citrá uśāsaḥ purástān mitā iva sváravo 'dhvarēsu | vy ū vrajāsya támaso dváro 'chántir avrañ chúcayaḥ pāvakāh*. A different word for the same notion is *ūrvā*.³⁰ Hence the fathers are said to have found the hidden light and to have engendered Uṣas after coming together at the *ūrvā*-; cf. VII. 76.4,5 *gūlham jyótiḥ pitáro ánv avindan satyámantrā ajanayann uśāsam || samānā ūrvé ádhi sámgatāsaḥ ...* The cosmogonical prototype of this repelling of darkness is particularly clear in I. 92.4 *gávo ná vrajám vy ūśā āvar támaḥ*. Therefore the doors which Uṣas is said to open in I. 113.4 *bhḍsvatī netrī sūnftānām áceti citrá vī dúro na āvaḥ* must be the *dúro ádrer* (VII. 79.3), the *vrajasya támaso dvārā* (IV. 51.2). See above (IV. 52.6 *vy āvar jyótiṣā támaḥ*) and cf. I. 121.4 (Indra) *ápa drúho mánuṣasya dúro vaḥ*. Only once Uṣas is said to have opened the gates of Heaven (see above, I. 48.15), which reference to the nocturnal sky also accounts for Uṣas being called *duhitā divāh*. This interpretation, which can here only be indicated in passing is also supported by I. 48.7, where Uṣas is said to have come from *parāvát-* (which in the Rígvēda always denotes the nether world): *eśā 'yukta parāvátah sūryasyo 'dāyanād ádhi*. A similar interpretation applies to the stone house (*harmyá-*) from which the light of Uṣas comes to this

²⁹ For further references see Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 61. Not conclusive is X. 29.2 *prá te asyā uśāsaḥ prāparasyā nṛtaú syāma nṛtamasya nṛnām*. The assonance suggests that *nṛtaú* must be construed with *te*; "at thy deliverance of this Uṣas". See also below, p. 275. Uṣas is likened to a dancer (*nṛtū-*, I. 92.4), just as Indra is the cosmic *nṛtū-* (Zimmer, *Altind. Leben*, p. 287; Von Schroeder, *Ar. Religion*, II, p. 72; Hillebrandt, *Ved. Myth.*, II, p. 153 n. 8. Cf. also AthS. V. 21.8).

³⁰ For references see Renou, *Et. véd.*, III, p. 7, n. 2.

world: VII. 76.2 *ābhūd u ketūr uṣāsaḥ purāstāt pratīcy āgād ādhi hārmye-bhyaḥ*. Geldner rightly points to VII. 6.4, where Agni Vaiśvānara is said to have brought the Dawns, who enjoyed themselves in the western darkness, to the East (*yó apācīne tāmāsi mādantīḥ prācīś cakāra nītamah śācībhiḥ*). So *harmyā-* must be equivalent to *ādri-*.

As a deity that has overcome the powers of the nether world, Uṣas is a Great Goddess (*mahī* III. 61.7, *mahi* I. 48.14, 16, VII. 81.1,4, AthS. V. 45.3). She is also called a Mother: *mātā devānām, āditer ānikam* (I. 113.19), *janitrī prajānām* (TS. IV. 3.11p). This character of hers is most prominent in AthS. X. 8.30 where, in a hymn full of "mystic" allusions, it is said that "She, everlasting, born indeed of old, she, ancient, encompassed all; the great goddess of the dawn, shining forth, she looks forth by every one who winks" (*eṣā sanātnī sānam evā jātaiśā purāṇī pāri sārvaṁ babhūva / mahī devy uṣāso vibhātī saikenaikena miṣatā vi caṣṭe*). Cf. also TS. IV. 3.11.

This cosmic importance need not be in conflict with the daily appearance of the dawn. There are in fact a few passages which clearly refer to the dawn of every day, cf. I. 123.4 *divé-dive nāma dādhanā, 8 adyā . . . śvó, 9 āhar-ahar niṣkṛtām ācārantī* and particularly the frequent use of the word *śāśvat-*. On the other hand the statement of the everyday re-appearance of the dawn does not necessarily imply that the dawns of all days had quite the same importance. The evidence to the contrary will be discussed below.

B. Darkness and the Goods of Life

The appearance of Uṣas represents the victory of Light over Darkness, of Life over Death. Her victory, like Indra's and Agni's, releases the goods of Life from the bonds of the nether world. If the Vedic poets associated her appearance with the bestowal of *dakṣiṇās*, this was ultimately due to her connection with the cosmic Present-giving, the Puraṁdhi. Once she is identified with Puraṁdhi: in III. 61.1 she is addressed in the words "Young woman of old, O Goddess bestowing all treasures, thou keepest thy pledges as Puraṁdhi" (*purāṇī devi yuvatīḥ pūraṁdhir ānu vratām carasi viśvavāre*). Just as she is said to have opened the doors of the firm rock, so she "opens" the goods of life. Cf. I. 123.6 *spārhā vāsūni tāmāśpagūlhā 'viś kṛṇvanti uṣāso vibhātīḥ*, V. 80.6 *vyūrṇvatī dāśūṣe vāryāni*. She repels the powers of Darkness and Evil:

dvēṣas-: I. 48.8 *āpa dvēṣo maghōnī duhitā divā uṣā uchad āpa sridhaḥ*, I. 113.12 *yāvayāddvēṣā ṛtapā ṛtejāḥ*, VII. 77.4 *ābhayaṁ kṛdhī naḥ / yāvāya dvēṣa ā bhara vāsūni*, V. 80.5 *āpa dvēṣo bādhamānā tāmāmsi*;

drūh-: I. 121.4 *āpa drūho mānuṣasya dūro vaḥ*, VII. 75.1 *āpa drūhas tāma āvar ājuṣṭam* (cf. 78.3 *apācīnam tāmo agād ājuṣṭam*);

duritā-: VII. 78.2 *uṣā yāti jyōtiṣā bādhamānā viśvā tāmāṁsi duritāpa devī*;

duṣvápnya-: VIII. 47.14 *yác ca góṣu duṣvápnyam yác cāsmé duhitar divaḥ tritāya tād vibhāvari āptyāya pārā vaha*, 16 *tritāya ca dvitāya cōṣo duṣvápnyam vaha*;

ābhva-: IV. 51.9 *gūhantīr ābhvam āsitam*, I. 92.5 *vī tiṣṭhate bādgate kṛṣṇām ābhvam*;

tāmas-: I. 123.7 *parikṣītos tāmo anyā gūhākar*, VII. 80.2 *gūdhvī tāmo jyōtiṣoṣā abodhi*, IV. 52.6 *āpaprūṣī vibhāvari vy āvar jyōtiṣā tāmaḥ*, VI. 64.3 *bādgate tāmo ajirō ná vólhā*, VII. 77.1 *ākar jyōtir bādhamānā tāmāṁsi*, VI. 65.2 *vī tā bādgate tāma ūrmyāyāḥ*.³¹

If we should explain the victorious power of Uṣas by a simple reference to the salutary effect of light in general, this would involve a misappreciation of the associations with the cosmic struggle of light and life against the powers of the nether world.

C. Uṣas as the first of a long procession

Eight times Uṣas is said to be the first of those to come: I. 113.8 *parāyatīnām ānv eti pātha āyatīnām prathamā śāsvatīnām*, 15 *īyūṣīnām upamā śāsvatīnām vibhātīnām prathamōṣā vy āśvait*, I. 123.2 *ōṣā agan prathamā pūrvāhūtau*, 5 *ūṣaḥ sūṇṛte prathamā jarasva*, I. 124.2 *īyūṣīnām upamā śāsvatīnām āyatīnām prathamōṣā vy ādyaut*, VII. 76.6 *ūṣaḥ sujāte prathamā jarasva*, 78.1 *prāti ketāvaḥ prathamā adṛṣrann ūrdhvā asyā añjāyo vī śrayante*, V.55.4 *yād uṣa aúchaḥ prathamā vibhānām*. Cf. also I. 152.3 *apād eti prathamā padvātīnām*.

Since this trait is so frequently mentioned, it must have been regarded as an important characteristic of Uṣas. So we are driven to the conclusion that the Uṣas here addressed can scarcely have been the dawn of any day. Those scholars who, like Keith, reject Hillebrandt's theory as being "wholly unsupported by any evidence" have dismissed this argument too lightly. Not any day in the endless succession of days can be called the first: the conclusion that the Uṣas addressed must be the first of a new period seems unavoidable. Indeed, the poets state explicitly that this Uṣas is the beginning not only of a single day, but of a long series: Uṣas brings the days (plural!). Cf. VII. 77.2 *gāvām mātā netry*

³¹ *ūrmyā-*, properly "related to the waves of the subterranean waters", hence "darkness"? See Neisser, *Zum Wörterb. des RV*, I, p. 182; Renou, *Et. véd.*, III, p. 86 f.

āhnām, 76.6 *gāvām netrī*, TS. IV. 3.11p *ṛtūnām pātnī prathamé 'yām āgād āhnām netrī janitrī prajānām*. As the dawn of the first day Uṣas is also said to know its name (I. 123.9 *jānaty āhnaḥ prathamāsya nāma śukrá kṛṣṇād ajaniṣṭa śvitīcī*, where the aorist shows that the dawn of this first day has just appeared). Whether a similar idea prevails in VII. 80.1, where the Vasiṣṭhas are said to have awakened first at the appearance of Uṣas is doubtful.

The cosmogonical prototype of Uṣas as the first of many is referred to in TS. IV. 3.11a (etc.) *iyām evā sá yá prathamá vyaúchat*, (m) *ṛtāsya gārbhaḥ prathamá vyūśūsy apām éka mahimānam bibharti*, (n) *yá prathamá vyaúchat sá dhenúr abhavad yamé* (cf. AthS. III. 10.1). In the Rigveda she is also called *agriyá* (see below). Mostly Uṣas is regarded as representing the whole series which she inaugurates, and sometimes, when there is a general reference to the *uṣāsaḥ*, she is obviously included in their number. Inversely, the plural seems to denote especially the first one in I. 92.1 *etā u tyā uṣāsaḥ ketúm akrata pūrve árdhe rájaso bhānám añjate*. Note also TS. IV. 3.11f *triṅśát svāsāra ūpa yanti niṣkṛtāṁ samānām ketúm pratimuñcāmānāḥ*, where the dawns of a month seem to be taken as one group. Sometimes, however, Uṣas is opposed to the great mass of ordinary days, e.g. I. 123.11 *bhadrá tvám uṣo vitarām vy ūcha ná tát te anyá uṣāso naśanta*. Renou's remark "L'U. actuelle comme privilégiée, selon la norme bien connue"³² fails to appreciate her importance as a *netry āhnām* fully.

A new succession of happy days is apparently inaugurated in I. 124.9 *āsām pūrvāsām āhasu svāsṛṇām āparā pūrvām abhy ēti paścāt | tāḥ pratnavān nāvyaśir nūnām asmé revád uchantu sudinā uṣāsaḥ*. The same hymn ends with the following words (13) *ástodhvaṁ stomyā bráhmaṇā mé 'vīṛdhadhvam úsatīr uṣāsaḥ | yuṣmākaṁ devīr āvasā sanēma sahasrīṇaṁ ca śatīnaṁ ca vājam*. In contrast with the other hymns to Uṣas, RS. IV. 51 is entirely addressed to the *Uṣāsaḥ*, which only proves that what is said about the first Dawn is also essentially true, though to a less degree, of all the following dawns. Cf. also I. 92.1 *prāti gāvó 'ruṣīr yanti mātāraḥ* "es kehren die roten Kühe wieder, die Mütter".

We are drawn to the same conclusion by the frequent use of the word *āgra-*, which also suggests that the beginning of a new period was celebrated. Uṣas, who is the foremost (*agriyá* X. 95.2), distributes the first goods (I. 123.4 *āgram-agram id bhajate vāsūnām*; but Geldner: "das Allerbeste von allen guten Dingen", similarly Renou), she goes in front of the other dawns (VII. 80.2 *āgra eti yuvatīr āhrayāṇā prācikitat sūryam*

³² *Etudes védiques*, III, p. 60.

yajñām agnīm), she inaugurates the sacrifice (VI. 65.2 *āgram yajñāsya bṛható náyantīr*). It is natural but significant that as a *netry áhnām* she brings her light *at the beginning of the days*, cf. V. 80.2 *eṣā jānaṁ darśatā bodháyantī sugāṁ pathāḥ kṛṇvatī yāty āgre | bṛhadrathā bṛhatī viśvaminvōśā jyótīr yachaty āgre áhnām*. The same phrase recurs in V. 1.4 *yád īm súvāte uśāsā vírūpe śvetó vājī jāyate āgre áhnām*, 5 *jāniṣṭa hí jényo āgre áhnām* (cf. IX. 86.42, X. 110.4). Equally significant is the fact that Agni is said to wait for the beginning of the Dawns, or to shine at that beginning: IV. 13.1 *prāty agnīr uśāsām āgram akhyad*, VII. 8.1 *agnīr āgre uśāsām āsoci*, VII. 9.3 *citrābhānur uśāsām bhāty āgre* VII. 68.9 *āgre budhānā uśāsām sumānmā*, V. 1.1 *āgre bṛhānn uśāsām ūrdhvā asthān nirjaganvān tamaso jyótiṣāgāt*, X. 44.5 *vī bhāty āgra uśāsām idhānāḥ*.

We must conclude that these references to the beginning of a new period are both too explicit and too frequent to be ascribed to the whims of certain poets. If this is true, only Hillebrandt's theory can account for them. Oldenberg's objection that this interpretation of the Uśas-hymns is "vielmehr hineingetragen als aus ihnen herauslesbar" (*Rel. des Veda*, p. 243 n. 1) disregards these facts. Deluded by "diese so durchsichtigen Texte" he has been blind to their real problems.

D. *This particular day*

With equal frequency the hymns stress the importance of the present day, at which Uśas is invoked to appear. A period of darkness has obviously come to a close: in I. 92.6 the poet says *ātāriṣma tamaso pārām asya* "we have attained the end of *this* darkness". Is this likely to be the end of the last night? Elsewhere we read: "Arise! The living spirit has come to us. Darkness went away, the light is coming. (The darkness) left its path for the sun to go. We have gone (to the point) where men prolong their life-time" (I. 113.16 *úd īrdhvaṁ jīvó āsur na āgād āpa prāgāt tāma ā jyótīr eti | draik pānthām yātave sūryāyāganma yātra pratirānta dyuḥ*). Again we must ask: is it likely from a psychological point of view that Vedic poets should have welcomed every new day as a point where they prolonged their existence? Renou, *Et. véd.* III, p. 52 remarks on this stanza: "Surrection soudaine de la phraséologie comme 92,6 . . . qui pourtant ne doit pas nous obliger à voir ici une allusion au début de l'année . . . : ceci reste une hypothèse". It might certainly be objected that any day *could* be regarded as a special day "selon la norme connue". This is true, but *was* every day actually regarded as such? In the twenty hymns to Uśas we meet with the word *adyā* as much as sixteen times: I. 48.15 *úšo yád adyā bhānūnā ví dvārāv ṛṇāvo*

divāḥ, I. 49.2 *tēnā suśrāvasaṁ jānam prāvādyā duhitar divaḥ*, I. 92.14 *ūṣo adyēhá gomaty āsvāvati vibhāvāri | revād asmé vy ūcha sūṁtāvati*, 15 *yukṣyá hí vājīnīvaty āsvāṁ adyādrūḍṁ uṣaḥ*, I. 113.7 *ūṣo adyēhá subhage vy ūcha*, 12 *ihādyōṣaḥ śrēṣṭhatamā vy ūcha*, 13 *śāśvat purōṣā vy ūvāsa devy átho adyédām vy āvo maghónī*, 17 *adyá tád ucha grṇatē maghoni*, I. 123.3 *yád adyá bhāgām vibhājāsi nṛbhyaḥ*, 8 *sadṣṣīr adyá sadṣṣīr id u śvó dīrghām sacante vāruṇasya dhāma* (see above, p. 226), 13 *ūṣo no adyá suhāvā vy ūcha*, IV. 51.4 *kuvít sá devīḥ sanāyo návo vā yāmo babhūyád uṣaso vo adyá*, V. 79.1 *mahé no adyá bodhayōṣo rāyē divítmatī*, VI. 65.3 *āvo dhāta vidhaté rātnam adyá*, VII. 75.2 *mahé no adyá suvitāya bodhi*, 78.5 *prāti tvādyā sumānaso budhanta*.

Other words that stress the present day are *nūnām*, *nū*. Cf. I. 124.9 *tāḥ pratnavān nāvyasīr nūnām asmé revād uchantu sudīnā uṣāsaḥ* (cf. I. 92.14 *ūṣo adyēhá . . . revād asmé vy ūcha*), I. 129.11 *vī nūnām uchād āsati prá ketúr*, I. 48.3 *uvāsoṣā uchāc ca nú devī jirā rāthānām*, IV. 51.1 *nūnām divó duhitāro vibhātīr gātūm kṛṇavann uṣāso jānāya*, VII. 75.8 *nú no gōmad vīravad dhehi rātnam*. Especial emphasis is expressed in VI. 65.4–5, where the words *āvo dhāta vidhaté rātnam adyá* are varied with a fourfold repetition of the word *idā* “now”: *idā hí vo vidhaté rātnam āstīdā vīrāya dāśūsa uṣāsaḥ | idā víprāya jārāte yād ukthā ní śmā māvate vahathā purā cit*. 5. *idā hí ta uṣo adrisāno gotrá gāvām āngiraso grṇānti*. Renou, *op. c.* III, p. 87 remarks: “Instant privilégie souligné par le pronom déictique”. Cf. also p. 52: “L’idée générale est la même: exalter l’U. d’aujourd’hui parmi l’ensemble des U., comme la divinité invoquée est exaltée parmi l’ensemble des divinités invocables”. I do not think this does full justice to the particular character of the passages cited.

E. As in former days

Sometimes the poet’s prayer for the present day is accompanied by a reference to former days: *pūrvāthā* I. 92.2, V. 80.6, *pratnavát* I. 124.9, VI. 65.6 (cf. V. 79.1). Though far from conclusive in themselves, these words find their most natural explanation if they are taken to refer to the beginning of former periods, rather than to the preceding days.

F. The new life

The poets pray for increase of their vital strength (VI. 44.9 *vārṣīyo váyaḥ kṛṇuhi śacībhir*), for prolongation of their earthly existence (X. 18.3 *drāghīya áyuh pratarām dādhanāḥ*). Psychologically it is hardly conceivable that such prayers should have been repeated at the beginning of every new day. The fact that such prayers are constantly directed to

Uṣas, and that they are accompanied by those for progeneration is, therefore, incompatible with the assumption that the everyday dawn is meant. Renewal of life is no common everyday experience, and it is this very renewal that Uṣas is expected to bring about, cf. VII. 80.2 *eṣā syá návyam áyur dádhānā*. Other passages are I. 48.10 *viśvasya hí prāṇanam jīvanam tvé ví yád uchási*, I. 113.8 *vyuchāntī jīvám udīráyanty uṣá mṛtām kām canā bodháyantī*, 16 *úd īrdhvaṁ jīvó ásur na ágād ápa prágāt táma á jyótir eti | draik pánthām yátave sūryāyá 'ganma yátra pratiránta áyuh (d = VIII. 48.11d, AthS. XIV. 2.36c), 17 asmé áyur ní didīhi prajávat, 19 á no jáne janaya viśvayāre*, VII. 77.5 (*asmé . . . ví bhāhy*) *úṣo devi pratirāntī na áyuh* VII. 81.6 *śrávaḥ sūribhyo amṛtaṁ vasutvanām vjāṁ asmábhyaṁ gómataḥ . . .* As the parallel phrase *úd īrdhvaṁ jīvó ásur na ágād* in st. 16 shows, the words *jīvám udīráyantī* in I. 113.8 should not be confounded with VII. 77.1 *viśvaṁ jīvám prasuvāntī caráyai*: Geldner's translation of I. 113.8 "im Aufleuchten alles, was lebt, auftreibend (aber) keinen Toten mehr erweckend" is not quite correct. The erect position represents life, and the victory of life over death. In Egypt the dead man is addressed with the words: "Arise, for thou art living; arise, for thou art not dead!"³³ In quite the same manner Uṣas, as the personification of Vitality (*sūnṛte* I. 123.5 etc., cf. *sūnari* I. 48.10), is said to stand erect: III. 61.3 *ūrdhvá tiṣṭhasy amṛtasya ketúḥ* "thou standest erect as the symbol of Life" (see below). Since Lommel has tried to *demonstrate that the expression *ūrdhvá- sthā-* means "mit Hilfe bereit stehen" (*ZII.* 8, 1931, p. 270 ff.) it may be useful to dwell on this point. Several passages are not conclusive, but the evidence as a whole allows us to state 1) that the notion of standing erect was of special importance to the poets. Cf. IV. 6.1 *ūrdhvá ū śú ṇo adhvarasya hotar ágne tiṣṭha*, 2 *ūrdhvám bhānūrṇ savitévāsred*, 3 *úd u svárur navajā nákrāḥ*, 4 *ūrdhvó adhvaryúr jujuṣāṇó asthāt*. Note the association of *úd* with *navajā akrāḥ*. 2) that the standing position was the manifestation *par excellence* of life. Cf. I. 172.3 *ūrdhvān naḥ karta jīvāse*, I. 36.14 *kṛdhī na ūrdhvāñ carāthāya jīvāse*, I. 140.8 *ūrdhvās tasthur mamrūṣiḥ prāyāve pūnaḥ*. An indirect indication that *sūnṛtā-* means "vital strength" and nothing else is to be found in I. 134.1 *ūrdhvá te ánu sūnṛtā mánas tiṣṭhatu* (where *ūrdhvá* should be connected with *tiṣṭhatu*. Cf. with this stanza VIII. 45.12 *ūrdhvá hi te divé-dive sahásrā sūnṛtā satá | jaritbhyo vimānḥate*, and further I. 123.6 *úd iratām sūnṛtā út púramdhīr úd agnáyaḥ śusucānāso asthuh*, I. 48.2 *úd iraya práti mā sūnṛtā uṣaś códa rádho maghónām*). With these passages may further be compared III. 61.3 (quoted above) *úṣaḥ praitīcī bhūvanāni víśvo 'rdhvá tiṣṭhasy amṛtasya*

³³ See W. B. Kristensen, *Het leven uit den dood*, 1st ed., p. 103 ff.

ketúh, where Uṣas as the symbol of life (*amṛta*-) is said to stand erect, and V. 1.2 *ūrdhvó agnīḥ sumānāḥ prātár asthāt . . . mahān devás támaso nír amoci* and X. 1.1 *ágre bṛhānn uṣásām ūrdhvó asthān nirjaganván támaso jyótiṣágāt*, where Agni's arising from the realm of darkness, if connected with the beginning of the new year, must have implied his victory over death (cf. IV. 51.2, VI. 64.1). 3) that in the other passages referring to Uṣas and Agni the same idea of a rebirth (I. 123.9 *ajaniṣṭa*!) may have been present in the mind of the poet, although this is not expressly stated. Cf. III. 55.14 (Uṣas) *pádyā vaste pururūpā vápūṃṣy ūrdhvā tasthau tryáviṃ rérihānā*, V. 80.5 *eṣā śubhrá ná tanvò vidānò 'rdhvéva snātí drśáye no asthāt*, VI. 63.4 (Agni) *ūrdhvó vām agnír adhvaréṣv asthāt prá rātír eti jūrínī ghṛtácī*, II. 35.9 *apdm nápād á hy ásthād upásthān jihmánām ūrdhvó vidyútām vásānaḥ*, IV. 6.1 (see above), X. 20.5 *juśád dhavyá mánuṣasyo 'rdhvás tasthāv fbhvā yajñé*, I. 164.10 *tisró mātṛs trīn pitṛn bíbhrad éka ūrdhvás tasthau ném áva glāpayanti*. In VII. 39.1 *ūrdhvā-* is combined with *śri-*: *ūrdhvó agnīḥ sumatīm vásvo áśret pratičī jūrínir devātātīm eti*. Cf. finally VIII. 27.12, where Savitr̥ is said to stand erect: *úd u śyá vah savitá supranītayó 'sthād ūrdhvó váreṇyaḥ*. 4) that our previous conclusion that in the Rigvedic hymns, as referring to the New Year festival, the idea of a renewal of life is closely connected with that of present-giving and victory over opponents may account also for III. 8.1, where the tree erected as a *yūpa* is addressed with the words: *añjānti tvám adhvaré devayánto vānaspate mádhunā datvyena | yád ūrdhvás tiṣṭhā dráviṇehá dhattād yád vā kṣáyo mātúr asyá upásthe* and for the following passages where the god is invoked for aid in contests: I. 30.6 *ūrdhvás tiṣṭhā na útáye 'smín vāje śatakrato*, I. 36.13 *ūrdhvā ū śú na útáye tiṣṭhā devó ná savitá | ūrdhvó vājasya sánitā yád añjibhir vāghádbhir vihváyāmahe*, VI. 24.9 *préśo yandhi sutapāvan vājān sthā ū śú ūrdhvā útí áriṣanyann aktór vyūṣtau páritakmyāyām*, VIII. 19.10 *yásya tvám ūrdhvó adhvaráya tiṣṭhasi kṣayádvīraḥ sá sād hate | só árvadbhiḥ sánitā sá vipanyúbhiḥ sá śúraiḥ sánitā kṛtām*. 5) that *ūrdhvā- sthā-* is only twice explained by a special place, viz. II. 30.3 *ūrdhvó hy ásthād ádhy antárikṣé 'dhā vṛtráya prá vadhám jabhāra* (the sole passage where Indra is said to stand erect; it should be noted that Indra has slain Vṛtra immediately after his birth), and IX. 85.12, X. 123.7 *ūrdhvó gandharvó ádhi náke asthād*. In the first passage *ūrdhvó hy ásthād* may be taken in the usual sense, which may be said to characterize *Life in its victory over Death*.³⁴ No inference can be drawn from Av. *ərədwa hištanta* Yt. 13.76.

³⁴ Cf. also Renou, *Et. véd.*, III, p. 12, n. 2.

G. Life and Security

Numerous are the passages where Uṣas is said to have overcome the darkness and its danger: in close association with *tāmas-* the hymns mention *dvēṣas-*, *drūh-*, *duritā-*, e.g. V. 80.5 *āpa dvēṣo bādhamānā tāmāṁsy uṣā divo duhitā jyōtiṣā 'gāt*, VII. 75.1 *āpa drūhas tāma āvar ājuṣtam*, VII. 78.2 *uṣā yāti jyōtiṣā bādhamānā viśvā tāmāṁsi duritā 'pa devī*. Now, just as *tāmas-* is used in the Rigveda in juxtaposition with *ānhas-* and *duritā-*, so is *bhāya-*. It must be due to mere accident that we do not here meet with the expression *tamo bhayam* (cf. e.g. ChU. I. 3.1 *udyaṁs tamo bhayam apahanti*). But the opposite *amṛtam abhayam* "life and security" (e.g. ChU. I. 4.4) was present in the minds of the poets; compare VII. 81.6 *śráyaḥ sūribhyo amṛtam vasutvanām* (IV. 5.13 *amṛtasya pātnīḥ*, III. 61.3 *amṛtasya ketūḥ*, VII. 75.3 *bhānāvo . . . amṛtāsaḥ*) with VII. 77.4 *urvīm gāvīyūtim ābhayam kṛdhī naḥ | yāvāya dvēṣo ā bhara vāsūni (: 5 pratirāntī na āyuh)*. Again we must ask: is it likely that the Vedic poet prayed every morning for security along with social prestige and wealth, or does this rather point to a period of crisis, to which the arrival of the dawn of the new year put an end?

H. Progeneration

The clearest manifestation of vital strength to the Vedic poet was progeneration, as well as material wealth. This is what he longs for as the clearest proof of his vitality, and since Uṣas was considered a *janitrī prajādnām* (TS. IV. 1.11p) she is implored to bestow vital strength and sons: I. 113.17 *asmé āyur ní didīhi prajāvat* (cf. I. 132.5 *āyuh prajāvat*). More usual, however, is the phrase *rayīm prajāvantam* (*vīrávantam*, *suvīram*), which is mostly translated by "wealth". Without denying the parallelism between material wealth and children as the manifestation of one's blessed state, it may be useful to point out that *rayī-* does not exactly denote "wealth" in our sense of the word. In II. 11.13 *asmé rayīm rāsi vīrávantam*, VI. 65.6 *suvīram rayīm gr̥ṇatē rirīhi*, etc., we have clear instances of a *figura etymologica* *rayīm rā-* (Indo-Ir. **raHīm raH-*), comparable with e.g. *añjy āṅkte* I. 124.8. The Indian notion of wealth implied that of a divine blessing, a gift (cf. Lat. *dīves: dīvus*, Gr. εὐδαίμων). The same association of vital strength with wealth (and social prestige) is still found in later Vedic texts, e.g. ChU. II. 11.2 (cf. 12.2–20.2) *sa ya evam etad gāyatraṁ prāṇeṣu protaṁ veda, prāṇī bhavati, sarvam āyur eti, jyog jīvati, mahān prajāyā paśubhir bhavati, mahān kīrtiyā. Mahāmānaḥ syāt . . .* V. 15.1 *tasmāt tvaṁ bahulo 'si prajāyā ca dhanena ca*. The sons one hopes to beget should be heroes: e.g. RS. V. 4.11 *aśvīnaṁ sá putrīnaṁ*

vīrávantam gómantaṁ rayīṁ naśate svastī, III. 24.5 *ágne dá dāsūṣe rayīṁ vīrávantam páriṇasam / śíśīhī naḥ sūnumátaḥ*, just as in later times the Upaniṣad assures: *asya kule vīro jāyate* (ChU. III. 13.6).

Now Uṣas is one of the Vedic deities that are specially implored to bestow progeneration. A few quotations may suffice: I. 92.8 *úṣas tám aśyāṁ yaśásaṁ suvīram . . . rayīm*, 13 *úṣas tác citráṁ á bharā 'smábhyaṁ vājīnīvati / yéna tokám ca tánayaṁ ca dhāmahe*, I. 123.19 *á no jáne janaya viśvavāre*, IV. 51.10 *rayīṁ divo duhitaro vibhātīḥ prajádvantaṁ yachatā 'smáṣu devīḥ . . . suvīryasya pátayaḥ syāma*. Once it is admitted that Uṣas has very close connections with life, it is not surprising that she should be invoked to secure progeny. Now the religious importance of the goddess Uṣas lies no doubt in her close association with the origin of life in the cosmogonical process, and every reappearance of the dawn is to some extent a re-enactment of this event, a rebirth of life itself. But again we must put the question: Is it likely that every dawn should have been invoked for life and offspring? Even texts which might suggest an exuberant adoration of every new day still make a significant distinction between the sun's *udaya-* and *pratyāyana-*, cf. ChU. III. 19.3 (in a cosmogonical myth) *atha yat tad ajāyata so 'sāv Ādityas, tam jāyamānam ghoṣā ulūlavo 'nūdatiṣṭhant sarvāṇi ca bhūtāni sarve ca kāmās, tasmāt tasyodayaṁ prati, pratyāyanaṁ prati, ghoṣā ulūlavo 'nūttiṣṭhanti sarvāṇi ca bhūtāni sarve ca kāmāḥ* (cf. however I. 11.7 *sarvāṇi ha vā imāni bhūtāny ādityam uccaiḥ santaṁ gāyanti*). The words *pratyāyanaṁ prati* might be taken as an explanation pointing to the fact that every new sunrise is a return (cf. RS. I. 123.12), but modern translations give the following rendering: "à son lever et à chacun de ses retours" (Senart), "at its rising and at its every return" (Hume), "al suo sorgere, a (ogni) suo ritornare" (Papesso). If so, the *udaya-* must be different from both the primordial birth and the everyday sunrise and can, it seems, only denote the new year's day. Although the little use that is made of technical terms for New Year remains unexplained, the prayers for progeneration (including cattle, e.g. *prajayā ca paśubhiś ca prajāyate* KS. XIII. 7: p. 189,19) can only be accounted for, if Uṣas inaugurates a new year. From RS. VI. 3.6 *sá īm rebhó ná prāti vasta usrdh śociṣā rārapīti mitrá-mahāḥ* "Wie ein Barde ruft er bei jedem Aufgang der Morgenröte laut mit seiner Flamme"³⁵ it does not follow that the *rebhā-* (see p. 276) praised the Dawn every morning.

³⁵ For *prāti vāsto* see Oldenberg, *ZDMG*, 55, p. 284.

I. *Wealth*

There is no hymn to Uṣas which does not contain the ever-recurring prayer for wealth. Wealth is the token of divine blessing, and this is the idea expressed by the Vedic words *rayī-*, *rāti-*, *rādhas-*. To the mind of the Vedic poets wealth was evidently closely connected with vital strength and progeneration: in the meaning of *sūnītā-* these concepts seem to have fused to such an extent that it may seem difficult to separate the various aspects. A few quotations may illustrate the importance of the wealth which Uṣas is besought to bestow: I. 92.8 *uṣas tām aśyām yaśāsam suvraṁ dāsāpravargaṁ rayīm āsvabudhyam*, I. 113.5 *ābhogāya iṣṭāye rāyā u tvam, 7 viśvasyē 'śānā pārthivasya vāsva ūso adyēhā subhage vy ūcha*, IV. 51.7 *tā ghā tā bhadra uṣasaḥ purdṣur . . . yāsv ijānāḥ śaśamānā ukthaī stuvāṁ chāmsan drāviṇaṁ sadyā āpa*, 10 *rayīm divo duhitaro vibhātīḥ prajāvantaṁ yachatā 'smāsu devīḥ*, IV. 52.3 *utó 'šo vāsva īṣiṣe*, VII. 75.5 *citrāmaghā rāyā īṣe vāsūnām*. The word *vāsu* has a specific religious colouring: it denotes the goods of life that were released in the beginning of the world, the goods of the nether world (like *vāmā-*, which Uṣas is also implored to bring, e.g. I. 124.12 *vahasi bhūri vāmām*, VII. 78.1, III. 61.6). But such mythological notions must have had their counterpart in reality. When Indra is exhorted to drink the Soma with the words VI. 47.6 *dhṛṣāt piba kalāṣe sōmam indra vṛtrahā śūra samarē vāsūnām* "Trink herzhafte den Soma aus der Schale, Indra, du der Feinde-töter in der Anhäufung von Schätzen, o Held" the ritual act of invigorating the god is closely associated with a reference to a present-giving, which may be the god's annual renewal of life, but which may equally well be an actual war or a ceremonial contest of the potlatch-type, in which wealth was won (or lost). The mythological concept (X. 139.3 *indro nā tasthau samarē dhānānām*) may also cover its replica in social life, and the *vāsūni* may be the goods won from the enemies that are the earthly representatives of the gods of the nether world.

J. *Uṣas as the goddess of contests (Potlatch?)*

At this point we are faced with the most important aspect of the worship of Uṣas: she bestows wealth, but this wealth is also won in strife, in contests which are fought with the traditional weapons of the Aryans, viz. with races and word duels.

RS. I. 48, which starts with a praise of Uṣas as *rāyā devi dāsvatī* in st. 1, calls her *jirā rāthānām* in st. 3, and depicts her in st. 6 as *vī yā srjāti sāmanam vy ārthīnaḥ* "who lets loose the contest, the competitors" (see below). The prototype of the competing hero, god Indra, was at the

same time victorious by his speech and his horses: VIII. 2.36 *sánitā vípro árvadbhir hántā vṛtrām nṛbhiḥ śúraḥ* "er gewinnt als Redner (und) mit den Streitrossen; der Held erschlägt den Vṛtra mit seinen Mannen". But although the ideal type of the *sabhéya- yúvan-* was not yet quite forgotten in later times (see below, p. 265), the Rigvedic society shows a further grade of specialization: the *maghāvan-* or *sūri-* here mostly secures the assistance of one or more priestly poets, who fight this part of the contest for him: VIII. 19.10 *só árvadbhiḥ sánitā sá vipanyúbhiḥ sá śúraih sánitā kṛtām* "der hat als Männerbeherrscher Erfolg, der gewinnt mit Rennpferden, der mit seinen Barden, der gewinnt den ersten Preis mit seinen Tapferen". They form a party with common interests: if the *sakhyá-* discussed below (p. 250) denotes this association of a *sūri-* with his helpers, the co-operation of these *sákhāyaḥ* (X. 71.2,6) might even be considered the ritual counterpart of the mythical co-operation between Indra and his *náraḥ*, who are also called *sákhāyaḥ* (I. 165.11). Anyway, in many passages the word *vayám* does not refer to the poets alone (and thus rules out the idea of merely literary tournaments) but to the different members of their party, e.g. when the poet says "We will win the *vájas* with our poems and race-horses" (*dhībhír árvadbhiḥ* VI. 45.12). As a single instance we may quote IV. 51.11 *vayám syāma yaśáso jáneṣu*. Often, however, the poets make a clear distinction between themselves and their patrons, e.g. VII. 78.5 *maghāvāno vayám ca*, I. 141.13 *amī ca yé maghāvāno vayám ca*, VI. 46.9 *maghāvadbhyaś ca máhyaṁ ca*. Cf. particularly VII. 81.6 *śrávaḥ sūribhyo amītam vasutvanām vájam asmābhyam gómataḥ / codayatrī maghónaḥ sūnṛtāvaty uṣā uchad āpa sridhaḥ* "den Opferherren (bringe sie) unsterblichen Ruhm und Wohlstand, uns rinderreiche Gewinne. Die Lohnherren anspornend möge die freigebige Uṣas die Unfälle wegleuchten", V. 86.6 (Indra-Agni) *tā sūriṣu śrávo brhád rayīm grṇātsu didhṛtam iṣaṁ grṇātsu didhṛtam*, I. 124.10 *revád ucha maghāvadbhyo maghoni revát stotrē sūnṛte jārāyantī*, V. 79.4 *abhi yé tvā vibhāvāri stómair grṇānti váhnayaḥ / maghaír maghoni suśríyo dāmanvantaḥ surātāyaḥ sūjāte áśvasūnṛte*, 6 *aīṣu dhā vīrávad yāsa úṣo maghoni sūriṣu / yé no rádhāmsy áhrayā maghāvāno árāsata sūjāte áśvasūnṛte*, 7 *tébhyo dyumnām brhád yāsa úṣo maghony ā vaha / yé no rádhāmsy áśvyā gavyā bhājanta sūráyaḥ s.a.*, VI. 65.6 *uchā divo duhitāḥ pratnavān no bharadvājavád vidhaté maghoni / suvīraṁ rayīm grṇaté rirīhy urugāyām ádhi dhehi śrávo naḥ*. These stanzas suggest the conclusion that the stress formerly laid on the importance of the dakṣiṇā as the poets' fee was rather excessive. The sole fact that the patrons are denoted by the same term *maghāvan-* which is characteristic of Indra (and Uṣas) allows only

one conclusion, viz. that at a certain festival these patrons had the same function on the social level as Indra had on the religious one, viz. that of distributing the goods of life, the *maghás*. It is indeed unbelievable that the *sūris* should have had the title of *maghāvan* during the whole year: even the reiteration of Indra's cosmogonical act must have been restricted to one well-defined period, viz. the beginning of the new year. Although it is admittedly very difficult to trace, behind the mythological allusions and identifications, the real events which the Vedic poets had in mind, this assumption allows us to arrive at a fuller and more concrete understanding of many hymns. RS. VII. 32, for instance, refers to a Soma-sacrifice: the Soma is being pressed for Indra but at the same time the poet expects from the god wealth and assistance in a chariot-race: 3. "Nach Reichtum verlangend rufe ich den Keulenträger", 5. "Keiner soll ihn hindern, wenn er schenken will", 11. "Zum Siegerpreis gelangt der darnach strebende Sterbliche, o Indra, dessen Helfer du wirst. Sei der Helfer unserer Wagen, unserer Mannen, du Held!", 12. "Dem Somavollen verleiht er Tüchtigkeit". Most interesting however are the stanzas 14 and 15, which Geldner translates as follows: "Welcher Sterbliche, o Indra, wagt sich an den, der dich besitzt? Im Vertrauen auf dich, du Gabenreicher, suchst am entscheidenden Tage der Preiskämpfer den Siegerpreis zu gewinnen. Ermutige in den Schlachten die Gönner, die liebe Güter verschenken! Unter deiner Anführung, du Falbenfahrer, möchten wir mit den Lohnherrn über alle Fährlichkeiten hinwegkommen". There is a ritual contest *pārye divi*, and the god is implored to stimulate the wealth-giving of the human *maghāvans* during the *vṛtrahátya* (14cd *śraddhá it te maghavan pārye divi vājt vājan siśāsati* 15ab *maghónaḥ sma vṛtrahátyeṣu codaya yé dádati priyá vásu*). Does not this ritual reiteration of the god's *vṛtrahátya* clearly refer to a winter ceremony, and is it not primarily the period of cosmic *ánhas* which is here denoted by *duritá*? (Cf. pp. 228, 234.) The giving of *maghás* (*maghāti*- V. 79.5) by the *sūris* may have aimed at stimulating Indra's wealth-giving by an imitative act. Apart from this religious aspect, however, it seems to have served also special ends on the social level: like chariot-races and word-duels, the present-giving has probably been a weapon in the social contest, which then must also have taken place in the same period of crisis, about the beginning of the new year. This is the Indian potlatch-festival, which Mauss and Held have recognized in the background of the Indian civilization.

Clear references to the role of Uṣas in these contests are however rare: Uṣas is addressed as *maghoni*, *citrāmaghe* (which implies a double

dependency of the poets, viz. on the patrons, *maghāvans*, and on the divine *maghōnī*, her task is to awake the earthly givers (I. 124.10 *prā bodhayo 'śaḥ prṇatō maghoni*, which admits of different interpretations; similarly I. 48.2 *cōda rādho maghōnām*, IV. 51.3 *rādhodēyāyo 'śāso maghōnīh*). Most important would be the consistent references to *vāja* in connection with Uṣas,³⁶ if only the exact meaning were beyond doubt. Although originally a quality attributed to a horse, a mule, a ram, the waters, etc.,³⁷ its meaning in the Rigveda seems to be a more restricted and technical one. It is on the one hand the victorious power which bestows the gifts and incites the gods themselves: Uṣas is *vājaprasūta*- (I. 92.8) and *vājīnī*-, *vājīnīvatī*-, the god Vāja incites the gifts (VS. 18.33 *vājo no adyā prasuvāti dānam*, cf. 9.2. *vājasya prasavē*).³⁸ On the other hand she wins the *vājas*, e.g. I. 123.2 *jāyantī vājam bṛhatī sānutrī*, I. 48.11 *īṣo vājam hī vāmsva yās citrō mātuse jāne*, 16 (*sām . . . mimikṣvā . . .*) *sām vājair vājīnīvatī*. As in the case of *sūnītā*-, however, Uṣas also bestows these *vājas* on men, e.g. I. 48.12 *sā 'smāsu dhā . . . ūṣo vājam suvīryam*, I. 92.7 *prajāvato nrvāto āśvabudhyān ūṣo góagrāñ ūpa māsi vājān*. The same idea is expressed in the next stanza by the word *rayī*:- *ūṣas tām āśyān yaśāsam suvīram dāsāpravargam rayīm āśvabudhyam / sudāmsasā śrāvāsā yā vibhāsi vājaprasūtā subhage bṛhāntam* "Aurore, puissé-je atteindre la richesse qui porte distinction, qui consiste en hommes utiles, commençant en esclaves, s'achevant en chevaux! Toi qui brilles d'un renom fait de réussite, ô bienheureuse, toi qui es mue par les prix de victoire, . . . (cette) haute (richesse)!" (Renou). Renou and Gonda (*op. c.*, p. 49 n. 68) rightly reject the translation "booty". If so, what can have been this *vāja*, which on the one hand was a quality, a sort of power, and on the other hand consisted not only of horses and cows but also, apparently, of slaves and renown (cf. VIII. 96.20 *sā vājasya śravasyāsya dātā*, VI. 45.12 etc.)? Renou holds the central meaning to be "prix"; besides the word may perhaps have denoted the "tournoi". If however a man's *vāja* was a quality, which manifested itself through wealth and which was won through the acquirement of this wealth (cf. I. 124.13 *yusmākarṇ devīr āvasā sanema sahasrīṇam ca śatīnam ca vājam*) the fundamental question is: Where was this wealth won, if ordinary war is ruled out? The terminology of the Rigveda does not allow us to determine, to what extent mock battles and ceremonial combats may have played a role in

³⁶ For references see Renou, *Et. véd.*, III, p. 21.

³⁷ Gonda, *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism*, p. 48.

³⁸ Geldner, note ad I. 77.4.

the ritual. Apart from these combats and the chariot races, however, the data point consistently to the *sabhā* as the place where the verbal contests as well as the gambling took place. Here cows were thrown for (see note 88) and the dakṣiṇā cows whose *brhād váyaḥ* was here spoken of (RS. VI. 28.6, see p. 278) may perhaps have been bestowed on the priests by the winner of such a gambling contest as proof of his wealth and power. Although it is probable that the seemingly vague terminology of the hymns refers to well-defined phenomena of social life, it is unfortunately impossible to ascertain, what exactly was covered by the general term *sámāna*- "meeting" in the phrase *ví yá srjáti sámānam* (I. 48.6). Since Uṣas could hardly be said to inaugurate all sorts of meetings, it is likely that the word is here used in a technical sense, and Geldner's rendering "Schlacht" would seem more appropriate than "rendez-vous" (Renou), which is based on the supposition of an erotic meaning of this hymn. But any speculation as to what this "contest" may have comprised is bound to be guess-work. However, since many data provided by the Rígvēda are strongly reminiscent of the winter ritual of the North American Kwakiutls, the most conspicuous characteristic of which was the potlatch-ceremony, the supposition that *vāja*- was the specific term for the wealth and prestige won in the ceremonial contest of the Aryan winter ritual (and, in a wider sense, for the contest itself) would seem attractive. Indeed, whoever is victorious in the *vāja*- is held to imitate his mythic prototype and to reiterate his exploit: V. 86.1 *índrāgnī yám ávatha ubhá vājeṣu mártiyam | dṛḷhá cit sá prá bhedati dyumná vāñir iva tritáḥ*. This seems to refer to the annual *vṛtrahátya*- (accordingly, if our conclusion is correct, to *vājas* about the winter solstice).

Gambling was not, however, the only way in which wealth could be won. Chariot races were equally important and that is, why not only the horses but also the chariots themselves were said to be *śravasyú*- "desirous of glory". Cf. IX. 96.16 *abhí vājam sāptir iva śravasyá 'bhí vāyúm abhí gá deva soma*, V. 37.3 *ásya śravasyād rátha á ca ghoṣāt*, V. 56.8 *rátham nú mārutaṁ vayám śravasyúm á huvāmahe*. Perhaps this may throw some light on the very obscure stanza I. 48.3 *uvāso 'śá uchác ca nú devī jírā ráthānām | yé asyā ácāraṇeṣu dadhrire samudré ná śravasyávaḥ*. Geldner translates: "die Wagen in Bewegung setzend, die auf ihr Kommen gewartet haben wie die auf Ruhmestaten ausgehenden (Seefahrer) auf die Meeresflut", Renou (-Oldenberg): "déesse animatrice des chars. Ceux qui, à ses approches, se tiennent prêts, tels des gens avides de renom (qui s'appêtent pour un voyage) en mer, ...". The chief difficulty is, indeed, *samudré ná* since the interpretations put forward

are unacceptable: *śrávas-* is a notion closely connected with society, renown is gained in this society by the means which it provides. There is nothing in the Rigveda suggestive of an overseas trade, or of a possibility of gaining renown by wealth acquired by such a trade. On the other hand there are several passages which suggest the inference that the cosmogonical streams released by Indra were as much desirous of glory as their ritual counterpart, the Soma: Soma is likened to horses in IX. 66.10 *pávamānasya te kave vājīn sárgā asṛkṣata | árvanto ná śravasyávaḥ*, IX. 87.5 *eté sómā abhí gavyá sahásrā mahé vājyā 'mṛtāya śrávāmsi | pavítrebhiḥ pávamāna asṛgrañ chravasyávo ná prtandjo átyāḥ*, IX. 10.1 *prá svāndsó ráthā ivá 'rvanto ná śravasyávaḥ | sómāso rāyē akramuḥ*. The association with the cosmogonical waters is particularly clear in I. 125.4 *úpa kṣaranti síndhavo mayobhúva ijānām ca yakṣyamāṇam ca dhenávaḥ | prṇántam ca pápurim ca śravasyávo ghṛtásya dhṛā úpa yanti viśvátāḥ* "Erquickend strömen dem die Flüsse, dem die Milchkühe, der geopfert hat und opfern wird. Dem, der reichlich spendet und schenkt, fließen von allen Seiten die Schmalzströme wetteifernd zu". Now, just as Soma is mythologically conceived of as streaming forth from the subterranean *samudrá-*, thought of as a *kalása-* *somadhṛna-*,³⁹ and as such is likened to horses "desirous of renown", so we might interpret I. 48.3 as "the goddess who animates the chariots that are held in readiness at her approach and are desirous of renown like (the waters) in the subterranean ocean". If the arrival of Uṣas coincided with the annual *vṛtrahátya-* and with the renewed release of the waters and the goods of life, this association would be quite understandable. In any case, the frequent references to Uṣas arriving with her own chariot(s) do not prevent us from taking *ráthānām* here as denoting the chariots ready for the fight for "glory" and for the *hitām dhánam*. A few stanzas from a single hymn to Indra may be quoted in illustration of this interpretation: VI. 45.11 *tám u tvā yāḥ purásitha yó vā nūnām hité dhāne | hávyāḥ sá śrudhī hávam, 12 dhībīr árvadbhir árvato vājāñ indra śravāyyān | tváyā jeṣma hitām dhánam, 14 yá ta útīr amitrahan makṣṭjāvastamā 'sati | táyā no himuhī rátham*.

K. Conclusions

We have tried to demonstrate, through the discussion of a single deity, that there is more evidence in the Rigveda suggestive of some

³⁹ Against Lüders, *Varuṇa*, pp. 268–271; cf. also K. Hoffmann, *OLZ*, 1954, col. 391 f.

connection with the beginning of the new year than Keith was willing to admit. For a conclusive demonstration, however, it would be necessary to discuss the entire evidence, including the hymns to Indra and Agni, and such very significant terms as *svarvīd-* and *svārṣāti-*, whose true character as referring to the finding and winning of the sun of the new year (cf. e.g. VII. 76.4) is mostly misunderstood. Cf. also *parivatsaré*, *paritakmyāyām*, etc. Indeed, no Vedic god can be fully understood outside the context of the whole mythology. That of the Rīgveda leads us always back to the cosmogony and its annual reiteration at the New Year festival.

There are certainly a few passages in the Uṣas-hymns which suggest a reference to everyday events, such as those depicting birds flying out in the early morning and men going to their work (I. 48.5, 6; I. 124.12, IV. 51.5) and the phrase *divé-dive* in the very special context of I. 123.4 (see further p. 227). Notwithstanding these, and in spite of the fact that in some other religions the daily return of the sun is indeed celebrated, it may be stated in general that the hymns to Uṣas are unaccountable as documents of religious thought, unless we take Uṣas to be in the first place the Dawn of New Year.

On the other hand, the preceding observations by no means claim to have fully explained all aspects of Uṣas. The sole fact that the Indo-Iranians worshipped, besides the Sun, which is the most radiant manifestation of the creation of the Cosmos, a goddess Dawn, indicates that they recognized in her an essential aspect, different from that of the Sun. It is not yet possible for us to understand, just what aspect induced them to worship such a separate goddess beside Agni-Sūrya. However, the fact that Uṣas seems to have been opposed both to Night and to Day-break, shows how intricate the theological ideas may have been. Cf. e.g. TB. III. 8.16.4 *uṣāse svāhā vyūṣṭyai svāhé 'ty āha, rātrir vā uṣāh, āhar vyūṣṭih, ahorātré evā 'varundhe, ātho ahorātrāyor evā prātitiṣṭhati*, etc. (Comm.: *uṣaḥśabdena rātryabhimānini devato 'cyate*). Indeed, Uṣas, as a kinswoman of Varuṇa (I. 123.5) and a sister of Night, is both closely related and opposed to Night and the nether world (cf. also G. Montesi, *Uṣāsānaktā*, *SMSR*, 28 (1957), p. 11 ff.). The relation Uṣas: Night may have been parallel to that of Mitra: Varuṇa. Anyway, there remains a particularly obscure aspect of the mythological concept of Uṣas, which it is impossible to explain, viz. her erotic character. Since this is, however, clearly an essential feature of hers, we can be sure that we are a long way yet from a complete insight into the nature of the Indo-Iranian goddess Dawn (cf. III. 61.7).

II. Avestan *vyāxana-*

A. THE FORM

The Avestan word *vyāxana-* is pre-eminently used in the Yašts, where it occurs eleven times. Besides it appears once in Yasna 62.5, and twice in the Vendidad, where it is an epithet of the god Nairyō.sanha (V. 22.7, 13). The word apparently belonged neither to the theological sphere of earlier Zoroastrianism, nor to its later magico-juridical stage of development, but to that stratum of literature which has preserved several traces of an early non-Zoroastrian civilization of Iran. Its meaning was according to Bartholomae "in der Versammlung sprechend, ihr Rat erteilend, beredt (ἀγορητής und βουλευφόρος)".⁴⁰ Before discussing its meaning, however, we must first consider more closely its form. From a strictly morphological point of view, indeed, there is some reason to question the correctness of the form in which the word is handed down to us. In the first place it should be noted that in all places where Geldner's critical apparatus records some variant readings, the reading *vyāxna-* or *vīāxna-* is attested by one or more manuscripts. The more prominent among these, it is true, show a marked preference for *vyāxana-*, which is the reading of the most important Yašt-MS. F₁ in all eleven Yašt-passages (but in Y. 62.5 it has *vīāxnaṃ*), and of Pt₁, for which the sole exception recorded by Geldner is *vīāxnī* Yt. 14.46 (from the derivative stem *vyāxanya-*). In the other MSS., however, the shorter form is rather frequent, e.g.

in K₁₃: *vyāxana-* 1 (Yt. 13.16) but *vyāxna-* 1 (Yt. 13.108).

in Mf₃: *vyāxana-* 1 (Yt. 13.16) but *vyāxna-* 1 (Yt. 13.108).

in L₁₈: *vyāxana-* 2 (Yt. 13.16; 14.46) but *v(a)āxna-* 3 (Yt. 10.25; 61 twice).

in E₁: *vyāxana-* 2 (Yt. 10.25; 14.46) but *vyāxna-* 3 (Yt. 10.61; 65; 13.16).

in J₁₀: —: *vyāxna-* 3 (Yt. 10.61 twice, 13.16).

in P₁₃: —: *vyāxna-* (*vīāxna-*) 6 (Yt. 10.25; 61 twice; 65; 13.108; 14.46).

These data are based on the nine occurrences for which Geldner gives variant readings, viz. Yt. 5.73; 10.25; 61₂; 65; 13.16; 108; Y. 62.5 and Yt. 14.46 (where the *hapax legomenon* **vyāxanya-* occurs). No other readings than *vyāxana-* are mentioned in Yt. 10.7; 13.52; 85; 134 and the two Vendidad-passages.

⁴⁰ *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, col. 1477.

In addition to the readings of the MSS. the evidence of the metre is of some importance for determining the exact Old Iranian form of the word (cf. Geldner, *Über die Metrik des jüngeren Avesta*, pp. 31 and 39). Out of the nine passages whose metrical structure is clear enough to allow some conclusions,⁴¹ three demand a four-syllabic form [*viyāxana-*], viz.

Yt. 10.25 *dātō.saokəm vyāxanəm*

Yt. 10.61 *arədwō.zəngəm zaēnaṇhuntəm*
spasəm taxməm vyāxanəm

Yt. 13.85 *yamca āθrō urvāzištahe*
spəntahe vyāxanahe

In the remaining passages the word is treated as a trisyllable, viz.

Yt. 5.73 (*avaṭ āyaptəm dazdi.nō*)

yaṭ bavāma aiwi.vanyā
dānavō tūra vyāxana

Yt. 10.61 *karšō.rāzanḥəm vyāxanəm (-zqm, -nqm Y. 62.5)*

Yt. 13.52 *buyāt nā stāhyō vyāxanō*
yō.nō bāda frāyazāite

Ny. 3.10 *stāhyanqm vyāxanānqm*

Yt. 13.16 *āṇḥqm raya xʷarənaṇhaca*
us nā zayeiti vyāxanō
vyāxmōhu gūšayaṭ.uxdō

At first sight, it might seem most natural to take these readings with Geldner as denoting [*vyāxana-*], resp. [*viyāxana-*], the more so, as the cognate word *vyāxmōhu* in our last quotation seems to represent a trisyllabic [*vyāxmahu*], loc. plur. of *vyāxman-*. Since however Indo-Iranian verbal roots ending in a guttural always have the corresponding palatal before the morpheme *-ana*⁴² (cf. Av. *raocana-*, *aojana-*, *anaēžana-*, *ažana-*⁴³), Wackernagel suggested to take *vyāxana-* as [*v(i)yāxna-*]; see *Festgabe Jacobi* (1926), p. 5. The validity of his argument may be doubted, since proto-Indo-Iran. *kh* – at least in those cases where it represented an earlier group of two phonemes *kH* – seems never to have been

⁴¹ The metre of Yt. 13.108 is not clear. Henning's discrediting of the whole theory of Geldner's *Metrik* shoots far beyond the mark. Though less correct than the Gothic prosody (which Henning leaves entirely out of consideration), it sometimes allows conclusions which are confirmed by historical linguistics. That *mazdā* can be read both as a disyllabic and as a trisyllabic word (*TPS*, 1942, p. 42, n. 2) is not so abstruse as Henning apparently held it to be.

⁴² Cf. Wackernagel, *Altind. Gramm.*, I, p. 151; *Festgabe Jacobi*, p. 5 (*Kleine Schriften*, p. 421).

⁴³ Unless this is a thematic derivative from **ažan-*. Probably connected with Skt. *aghā-*, see *Acta Or.*, 17, p. 35.

palatalized before front vowels.⁴⁴ Still his conclusion must be correct, as a word [vyāxana-] would have to be traced back to a root *vyākh- *yākh-, or *ākh-. Now, surd aspirates have hardly constituted a separate class of phonemes in proto-IE.,⁴⁵ whereas Indo-Iranian roots ending in *kh* are very rare: the sole Rigvedic instances are, indeed, *īnkh-*, *ūnkh-* and *rikh-*.

On the other hand, there is one word which seems decidedly to demand the assumption of a root (v)yāx-, viz. *vyāxa-* in Gāh 2.8 *vyāxəmca hanjamanəmca yaṭ as aməšanəm spəntanəm*. Bartholomae rightly preferred this reading *vyāxəmca* (Mf₃ E₁ and two other MSS.) to the *lectio facilior* *vyāxnəmca* (Pt₁ and five MSS.) of Westergaard's and Geldner's editions. Indeed, the context requires a substantive, and *vyāxnəm* is obviously a clumsy emendation of a copyist, who substituted the well-known adjective for the obscure and isolated *vyāxəm*. This does not imply, however, that the better reading is also the correct one. The whole passage in Gāh 2.8 is apparently an imitation of Y. 57.12 (*sraoṣəm*), *yō vīspaēibyō haca arəzaēibyō vavanvā paiti.jasaiti vyāxma aməšanəm spəntanəm* "(Sraoša), who glorious comes back from all battles to the *vyāxman* of the Aməša Spəntas". Since the stem *vyāxa-* is not attested elsewhere,⁴⁶ there can be no doubt that *vyāxəmca* is a corrupt reading for **vyāx(ə)maca*, owing to an incorrect vocalization of *wy'hmc*. In contrast with the disyllabic stem *vyāxman-* in Yt. 13.16, the end of Y. 57.12 may be read as follows:

[patijasati viyāxma
amṛtānām spanitānām]

Nothing, accordingly, prevents us from taking *vīāxna-* (v.l. in Y. 62.5, Yt. 5.73; 10.25, cf. *vayāxna-* v. 1.) as a more exact rendering of the Old Iranian [*vīyāxna-*]. Its frequent spelling as *vyāxana-* and its use as a four-syllabic word in three metrical passages is paralleled by the word *šyaoθana-*, n. "action" which, though standing for [*šyauθna-*] (cf. Ved. *cyautná-*), is only written as a disyllable in the Yašts, the Vendidad and some late texts, whereas the Yasna text always has *šyaoθana-* instead.

⁴⁴ See, e.g., Wackernagel, *Altind. Gramm.*, I, Nachtr. ad p. 140, 11; *Notes on Vedic Noun-Inflexion*, p. 28.

⁴⁵ Ved. *śāṅkhá-* "shell" (AthS.): Gr. *κόγχος* probably not from IE. **konkho-*, since *κόγχος* (and *κόλχη*?) rather point to a foreign origin, which might also account for *kh*. The correspondence *ś*:*x* would have to be explained as in *śanā-*, m. "hemp" (RS. +), Oss. *san*: Gr. *σάνναβις* (note the Rigvedic *n*!). For *prthuka-* see *Lingua*, 5, p. 320, n. 1.

⁴⁶ The reading *vyāxanəm* for *vyāxananəm* Ny. 3.10 in F₁ Pt₁ etc. is of course due to haplography.

In the Gathas it is actually used as a trisyllable in Y. 48.5 (which consists of lines of 5 + 7 syllables):

<i>huxšaθrā xšāntam</i>	<i>mā.nē duša.xšaθrā xšāntā</i>
<i>vañhuyā cistōiš</i>	<i>šyaoθanāiš ārmaitē</i>
<i>yaoždā mašyāi</i>	<i>aiπī.zqθəm vahištā</i>
<i>gavōi vərəzyātəm</i>	<i>təm nē x'arəθāi fšuyō</i>

<i>[huxšaθrā xšyantām,</i>	<i>mā nah dušxšaθrā xšyanta</i>
<i>vahviyāh cistaiš</i>	<i>šyauθ.nāiš, aramatai</i>
<i>yauž dāh martiyāi</i>	<i>apizanθam vahištā</i>
<i>gavai vryzatām.</i>	<i>tām nah huarθāi fšuyah]</i>

"Good rulers must rule us, may not evil rulers rule us! With deeds of good insight bless, O Aramati, what is best for Man: the rebirth, and for the Cow her activity. Fatten her for our food!"⁴⁷ While *duš.šyaoθanāi* in Y. 31.15 might be read as [*duššiyauθnāi*] according to Sievers' law (Andreas-Wackernagel: *duššiyauθnāi*, Humbach: *duššiyauθanāi*), here no other interpretation seems possible (despite Humbach, who assumes 5 + 6 in b and d). Similarly *cyautnā-* is trisyllabic in RS. VI. 47.2c *purūni yās cyautnā sāmbarasya*.⁴⁸ In quite the same manner the four-syllabic *vyāxana-* will have to be taken as [*viyāx.na-*]. The current spelling *vyāxana-* (which in Y. 62.5 has the weighty support of such MSS. as J₂ K₅ Pt_{4.1} Mf₁ Jp₁) and *šyaoθana-* suggests the influence of a normalizing school tradition, although in other cases, such as GAv. *varana-* Y. 45.1, 2 against *varəna-* Y. 31.11, 48.4, 49.3 (Yt.) no such fixed tradition is met with.

A derivative of *vyāxana-* is the hapax legomenon *vyāxanya-* in Yt. 14.46 *aētaēca tē vācō yōi uyra ās dərəzra ās, uyra ās vyāxaine ās, uyra ās vərəθrayne ās, uyra ās baēšazya ās* "These are the words that are strong and firm, strong and *viyāxniya-*, strong and victorious, strong and healing." Here we must apparently assume a stem [*viyāxn(i)ya-*] parallel to [*vṛθragnya-*] and [*baišazya-*], but while the last two words are derivatives from a substantive, *vyāxaine* is more likely to be the common adjective, which has here incidentally adopted the ending of the other words. Benveniste, *Vṛtra et Vṛθragna*, p. 44 n. 3 reads *vyāxmanya-*, which, though

⁴⁷ Many details remain uncertain. See, e.g., Lommel, *Gött. Nachr.*, 1935, p. 130. For the meaning of *yaoždā-* see W. B. Kristensen, *Leven uit den Dood*², p. 116; *Verzamelde Bijdragen*, p. 239; for the durative present [*xšyantām*] see ZII, 8, p. 248 f. for [*huarθāi*] cf. Y. 34.11 [*huarθāi ā amrtāsca*]. A quite different translation is now proposed by Humbach.

⁴⁸ See Arnold, *Vedic Metre*, p. 22, and Oldenberg, *a. l.*

probably an error, would be a more regular formation. The MSS. however have only the readings *vyāxaine*, *vīāxni* (*vīāxana*, *vāi.āxaine*).

B. THE MEANING

The meaning assigned to *vyāxana-* in the *Altir. Wb.* (see p. 243) has rightly been questioned by Benveniste, l.c. He points out that the word, when used as an epithet of the Turanian Dānus (Yt. 5.73) must refer not to their eloquence but rather to "quelque qualité guerrière". It is, indeed, everywhere used in a context referring to "la fermeté, la force ou l'autorité", and in juxtaposition with such adjectives as *taxma-* "valiant", *stāhya-* "firm", *karšō.rāza-* "regulating the furrow, or boundary-line" (cf. Thieme, *Mitra and Aryaman*, p. 29, Gershevitch, *The Avestan Hymn to Mithra*, p. 210). Cf. Yt. 13.16 *vyāxanō vyāxmōhu gūšayaṭ.uxδō* „qui dans les tournois fait triompher sa parole", from which words Benveniste rightly concludes: "Il s'agit en effet d'une joute oratoire d'où cet homme sort victorieux". This led Gershevitch, *op. c.*, p. 77, to translate it as "challenging". Since however Benveniste, in the absence of a convincing etymological explanation, refrained from deciding whether the word originally referred to the debate or the combat, his definition "ἀγωνιστής, propre à la rencontre, apte au débat ou au combat, champion" has given rise to some misapprehensions. Thus Nyberg, *Irans forntida Religioner*, p. 68 (cf. *Die Religionen des alten Irans*, p. 438) paraphrased this in his own words by "connected with the battle or the battle-field, god of the battle-field", and Wikander, *Vāyu*, I, p. 200 n. 1, considered the possibility of deriving *aršya-* Yt. 13.108 from *arəša-* "bear" because "apte à la lutte" would then be a fitting epithet. We must therefore consider its use more closely. Yt. 13, after stating that through the brightness and glory of the Fravašis the embryo is maintained in the womb (11), and that the womb in females, the milk in females' breasts is purified (8), the females conceive offspring and become blessed with children (15), has the following lines (16):

āṇḥam raya xʷarənaṇhaca
us nā zayeiti vyāxanō
vyāxmōhu gūšayaṭ.uxδō
yō bavaiti xratu.kātō
yō nāidyāṇhō gaotəmahe
parō.yā parštōiṭ avāiti . . .

"Through their brightness and glory a man is born who is victorious in debates, whose authoritative words are listened to in the verbal contests,

who is esteemed for his quick wit, who comes off from the dispute triumphing over the weaker Gautama". As for *-uxda-*, Thieme is probably right in rendering it by "der feierliche und massgebende Spruch",⁴⁹ while [*pr̥ṣti-*], the dispute in which only one's quick wit can lead to victory, may be compared to Ved. *pr̥ṣthá* "Rätselfragen" RS. IV. 2.11, X. 89.3⁵⁰ and to *pr̥ṣ-* "(assertion in) a dispute".

Quick wit was of immense importance in ancient Aryan society (*jhaṭ iti prativaktavyam sabhāsu vijigīṣubhiḥ!*). It may be worth while, therefore, to consider more closely the religious background of this notion. That inspiration is suddenly born from Man's unconscious mind, could only be due to divine assistance. Indra's breaking down of the resistance (*vr̥tratūrya-*, *vr̥trahātya-*) not only brings to light the goods of life by splitting open the primordial hill, but also, and at the same time, breaks Man's inner resistance and gives inspiration. Our formulation may seem modern, the ideas certainly are not. The Vedic poet juxtaposes in one verse *v̥jasāti-* "the winning of the prize" and *medhāsāti-* "the winning of the (religious) insight" as manifestations of the same salutary activity of Indra, e.g. VIII. 40.2 *sá naḥ kaddá cid árvatā gāmad á v̥jasātaye, gāmad á medhāsātaye*. The god of inspiration *par excellence*, however, is Agni. Born in the nether world as a child of the Cosmic Waters, he manifests his victoriousness by his arrival as a guest (*átithi-*) among men, and at the same time he brings with him, as the *guru par excellence*, knowledge of the cosmic Truth, wisdom, insight, and inspiration. He is indeed the *dhárā rtāsya* (I. 67.7). The well-known hymn RS. VI. 9 depicts how the poet, by devout concentration upon the god, experiences this inspiration as an ecstasy. Hence Agni is called "the inventor of resplendent speech" (*tvām śukrāsya vācaso manótā* II. 9.4), "bringing the light of inspired speech" (*viprām jyótīmṣi bibhrat* III. 10.5). Most instructive is RS. IV. 11.2–3, which Geldner renders as follows: "2. Schliesse, o Agni, dem Lobsänger durch Beredsamkeit den (dichterischen) Gedanken (wie) einen Kanal auf, wenn du, von starker Art, gepriesen wirst. Gib uns den reichen Gedanken ein, du Herrlicher, den du mit allen Göttern gut aufnehmen wirst, du Hellfarbiger. 3. Von dir, Agni, stammen die Sehergaben, von dir die Gedanken, von dir die trefflichen Gedichte. Von dir kommt Reichtum, dessen Zierde die Söhne sind, dem danach trachtenden opferwilligen Sterblichen". Agni, like Indra, bestows at the same time material riches, sons, and inspiration (*manīṣá-*, *bhūri*

⁴⁹ Thieme ap. Altheim, *Weltgeschichte Asiens*, I, p. 98 f.

⁵⁰ Thieme, *Der Fremdling im Rigveda*, p. 65; Renou-Silburn, *JA*, 1949, p. 43, n. 2 (equivalent to *brahmodya-*).

mánma). The most interesting detail, however, is that Agni is implored to open the *khá-*, which is (like *útsa-*) the specific term for the aperture in the cosmic hill, the well which Indra has opened with his *vájra*. Cf. IV. 28.1 *áhann áhim áriṇāt saptá síndhūn, ápāvṛṇod ápihiteva kháni*, II. 15.3 *vájreṇa khány atrṇan nadínām*, V. 32.1 *ádardar útsam ásrjo ví kháni*, VII. 82.3 (to Indra and Varuṇa) *ánv apám khány atrntam ójasā*. Now inspiration was to the Vedic poet an “opening of the doors of the mind”, which was on a level with the “opening of the doors of the primordial hill”, cf. e.g. IX. 10.6 *ápa dvārā matínám pratná ṛṇvanti kārāvah* with IV. 51.2 *vy ù vrajásya támaso dváro ’chántir avrañ chúcayah pávakāh* (see p. 225). The same mythological concept is expressed in IV. 11.2 by the word *khá-* “aperture”. This aperture is the well which Agni must open to give free course to Inspiration from the *hṛ́dya- samudrá-*, the primordial waters in Man’s heart (IV. 58.5, cf. p. 241). Now it has long been observed that this notion of a cosmic well was inherited from the common Indo-Iranian religion; the older athematic form *khá-* occurs both in RS. II. 28.5 *ṛdhyāma te varuṇa khám ṛtásya* and in the Avesta, cf. Y. 10.4 *haiθīmca ašahe xā ahi* “Verily thou art the well of the cosmic Truth”. In explanation of this mythological concept a few words may here be inserted. Varuṇa is the god of the cosmic waters beneath the earth. A striking confirmation of this interpretation, which alone enables us to understand the place of Varuṇa in Vedic cosmology, may be seen in the curious fountain slabs dating from the 11th and 12th centuries A.D. which Vogel has found in Chamba State and which the inscriptions call *Varuṇadevah* (J. Ph. Vogel, *Antiquities of Chamba State*, 1911, p. 29 ff.). Varuṇa was also the god of stagnant water (TS. VI. 4.2.3, ŚB. IV. 4.5.10, cf. MS. IV. 8.5: p. 112,3 ff.; KS. XXIX. 3: p. 171,3; KapKS. 45.4: p. 270,22; JB. II. 67), because this represents the subterranean waters of Varuṇa’s realm of inertia. Now the well-spring is the place where Man comes in contact with the nether world and, since Rta resided in these waters (RS. V. 62.1), also with Rta itself. (The other aspect of the nether world explains the belief that the *svákṛtam írinam* and the *pradaráh* are *nīrtigrhīta-*, TS. III. 4.8.5). The occurrence of similar ideas in Delphi and Rome may be noted in passing. It is not surprising, therefore, that just as Agni is implored to bestow inspiration in the Veda, so the Fire-god Ātar is in the Avesta. Cf. Y. 62.4 *dāyā mē . . . mastīm spānō xšviwṛam hizvaṃ urunē uši xratūm pascaēta masitām mazāntām apairi.āθrām* “Gib mir . . . Wissen, Heiligkeit, eine flinke Zunge, der Seele Auffassungskraft, alsdann Gedächtniskraft, grosse umfassende unvergängliche” (Bartholomae-Wolff). The notion that the

speaker owes his inspiration, his quick wit, to the Fire-god must therefore have been inherited from the common Indo-Iranian religion.

Reverting to the passage Yt. 13.16 we must still consider more closely the most interesting word, viz. *xratu.kāta-*. This has been translated "whom Wisdom holds dear", "aimée de l'Intelligence" (Darmesteter), "der von der Weisheit beliebt ist" (Altheim), "den man um Beléhrung, Rat angeht" (Bartholomae), "von dem man Weisheit begehrt" (Lommel). Its true meaning becomes clear from a comparison with the Rigvedic Hymn to Speech (X. 71), which is one of our most important sources of information concerning the ancient Aryan verbal contests. Each party (*sakhyá-*) has among its members (*sákhāyaḥ*) some who have become "both stiff and stout" (5a *sthirápīta-*) and whom they, therefore, do not send to the contests (5b *nainam hinvanti āpi vājineṣu*). These are "left behind in knowledge" (7c *ātrá 'ha tvaṃ ví jahur vedyádbhir*), they are useless (9cd, cf. IV. 5.14!). But the most prominent among those who "have in their heart gained mental quickness" (8a *hṛdá taṣṭṣeṣu mánaso iáveṣu*) they send to the contest and (10) "All friends rejoice when their companion famous Returns from the assembly hall a victor, He drives away reproach and wins them nurture: He is sent out as fitted for the contest" (Macdonell). Such a *sabhāsāhá-* may rightly be called "esteemed for his quick wit" (*xratu.kāta-*). Cf. Geldner, *Übers.*, I, p. 289, n. 1.

He is also called *parō.yā* "triumphant" (c.gen.). Bartholomae explains this word as "vorangehend, siegreich" and compares Ved. *puroyávan-* "going in front, leading". It would accordingly be the nominative of a stem *parō.yā-*, cf. Ved. *eva-yā-* "going quickly" etc. Since however this explanation is not quite plausible on account of the meaning of *parō.yā*, we may consider the possibility that it is the nominative *-yāh* (from **-ya'āh*) of a stem *-yāh-* (from **-ya'ah-*);⁶¹ cf. e.g. GAv. *hudā* [*huda'āh*], Y. 48.3, nominative of *hudāh-* [*huda'ah-*]. Our main reason for doing so is the passage Yt. 13.108

vañhəuš aršyehe ašaonō
fravašim yazamaide
aršyehe vyāxanahe
yāskərəstəmahe mazdayasnanəm

"We worship the Fravaši of the holy and good Aršya; of Aršya, who is victorious in debates, who is the best achiever of *yāh* among the wor-

⁶¹ For the analysis **yaH-ah-*, cf. Baunack, *Studien*, p. 362; Kuryłowicz, *Traces de la place du ton*, p. 21, against Bartholomae, *GrIrPhil.*, I, pp. 125, 215.

shippers of Mazdā". Was *yāh-* originally the technical term for debates, and is the eschatological meaning it has in Zarathustra's theology due to a new and specialized use of the word? That it has preserved a different meaning in the Yašts from that which it has in the Yasna, may also be inferred from Yt. 11.3 *aršuxδō vāxš yāhi vərəθrajqstəmō*, which Lommel translates "dieser Spruch, recht gesprochen, ist bei der Entscheidung (?) der siegreichste". His doubt as to the eschatological meaning, which Bartholomae assumed also for this passage, seems justified. Two details, indeed, speak against this interpretation. Firstly, the *yāh-* achieved by the *yāskarət-* is a decision brought about by a word, accordingly a victory in a verbal contest. Secondly, this word is said to be *vərəθrajan-*. Now, *vṛtrá-* is in the Veda the force of resistance which Indra and the other powers of Creation, such as Agni and Soma, have to break down before the creation of the dual world of the Cosmos can be realized (see above, p. 218). The *vṛtrahátya-* accomplished by men is clearly a re-enactment, a reiteration of the Creation itself. Since it is quite inconceivable that this unequivocal reference to the Creation could be due to a secondary specialization, we must conclude that it was already a conception of Indo-Iranian religion.⁵² The fact that Haoma is called *vərəθrajan-* in the Avesta, just as Soma is a *vṛtrahán-* in the Veda, shows that in the Later Avesta some traces of the older usage of the word have been preserved. Perhaps such occasional speculations as *agnísómābhyañ vai vīryēñé 'ndro vṛtrám ahan* MS. II. 1.3 (p. 5,1) also allude to this ancient mythological idea. In any case the Vedic texts leave no doubt that the verbal contest was also a reiteration of the primordial fight with the cosmic forces of resistance (*vṛtráni*); this is, indeed, true of all sorts of combat: "He verily slays Vṛtra who is a victor in the battle" (*vṛtrám khálu vá eṣá hanti yáh saṅgrāmám jáyati* MS. II. 1.3: p. 4,17). In AthS. II. 27 the *pāṭā*-plant is invoked to "overcome the debate of the opponent"; cf. the refrain *prášam prátiprāšo jahi*. With the aid of the same plant, however, one hopes to conquer his enemies, cf. st. 5 *táyā 'hám sátrūnt sākṣa indrah sālāvṛkām iva* "by means of it I shall conquer the enemies, as Indra (conquered) the Sālāvṛkas". The parallelism which the poet states to exist between his fight and Indra's should be noted. Now in st. 2 this plant is said to have been found by an eagle – just as an eagle (we may add) is known to have brought Soma (the plant whose juice invigorated Indra in his cosmic combat) to the god –, and to have been dug out by a boar with his snout – just as a boar has dug out the earth from the bottom of the cosmic waters, before Indra could expand it

⁵² Otherwise Ugo Bianchi, *Zamān i Ōhrmazd* (1958), p. 35.

(2ab *suparṇás tvā 'nvavindat sūkarás tvā 'khanan nasā*). If however such importance was attached to the debate, it must have been considered a creative act itself, a renovation of life. The fact that the battle-drum is exhorted to "carry forth its sound as a speaker his speech" (AthS. V. 20.11 *vāgvī 'va mántram prá bharasva vácam*) points to the same association of ideas. In st. 2 the battle-drum is said to "own Indra's foe-subduing fire" (*aindrás te śúṣmo abhimātiṣāhāḥ*) and in V. 21.8 its sound is apparently considered to reproduce that of Indra's feet during his creative dance.⁵³ On the other hand the man who triumphs in a verbal contest represents Indra himself. Thus the poet of RS. X. 166, who in st. 3 refers to such a contest in the words *vácas pate ní śedhe 'mán yáthā mād ádharam vādān*, compares himself to Indra in st. 2: *ahám asmi sapatnahé 'ndra ivá 'riṣṭo ákṣataḥ* "I am a slayer of my rivals, unhurt and uninjured like Indra". Therefore the battle-drum is exhorted to sound as victoriously as the powerful speech of such a conqueror of his opponents: indeed, its *vác-* (AthS. V. 20.11) is considered to possess the creative power of Indra, the *vṛtrahán-* *par excellence*. Only these parallels enable us to appreciate the original full meaning of the words *arśuxdō vāxš yāhi varəθrajaṣtāmō* in Yt. 11.3. Indirectly this gives a clue to the meaning of *yāskarət-* (which will be discussed below, p. 256) and probably also of *parō.yā*, which may be taken as the nominative of *parō.yāh-* "victorious in the contest with (gen.)". *Parō-* is then equivalent to Skt. *parāḥ* "higher, more than" (see *Altiran. Wörterbuch*, col. 857).

Although this interpretation, based upon the evidence of the Vedic and Avestan texts, has to be judged on its own merits, a comparison with an archaic culture of our days may lend some support to it. The following quotations have been taken from Hans Schärer's admirable study on the religion of the Ngaju Dyaks in South-Borneo.⁵⁴ "Von einem Glied der hohen Gruppe wird erwartet, dass es ausgeglichen, physisch und psychisch harmonisch, selbstbeherrscht, zuverlässig, arbeitsam, ruhig, tapfer, redegewandt und tugendhaft sei" (p. 46). The gods "geben ihm Gesundheit und Mannesmut und erfüllen sein Herz mit reichen und verständigen Gedanken und öffnen seinen Mund, dass er ein guter Redner wird, der in den Formen der Urzeit spricht und Rat erteilt, so dass sein Wort wie das der fernen Ahnen klingt, die in ihm und aus ihm sprechen. Sie . . . stehen ihm bei in der Rechtssprechung, damit er als Richter weise urteile und bei jeder Anklage als Sieger hervorgehe" (p. 89). "Der wahre und

⁵³ Turner *Jubilee Volume*, p. 360.

⁵⁴ H. Schärer, *Die Gottesidee der Ngadju Dajak in Süd-Borneo* (thesis Leiden, 1946).

vollkommene Mensch ist basewut = berühmt. 'Er steht in der Gemeinschaft da wie der hohe Baum auf dem Dorfplatz ...'. Durch ihn hindurch sehen und sprechen die Gottheiten auch die Gemeinschaft und den ganzen Kosmos an und segnen sie mit den Heilsgaben, die sie ihm verleihen" (p. 90). On p. 114 Schärer points out "dass Rechtssitzung und Rechtssprechung ... ein kosmisches Geschehen und eine Sache der totalen Gemeinschaft sein müssen". "Der ganze Rechtshandel ist ein Streit zwischen zwei Gruppen, der mit Worten geführt wird. Wer am besten sprechen kann oder für seine Verteidigung den besten Sprecher besitzt, gewinnt den Streit. Der Sieg verleiht Ansehen, nicht weil die Unschuld an den Tag gekommen, sondern weil der Streit gewonnen worden ist. Aus diesem Grunde wird, wenn ein Rechtsfall geschlichtet werden muss, so viel gesprochen und gelogen. Man kann nicht sagen, dass der Dajak ein grösserer Lügner sei als jeder andere Mensch ... wenn er beim Rechtshandel lügt, dann geschieht es nicht einfach deshalb, weil er sich aus einer unangenehmen Situation retten will, sondern weil er den Wortstreit gewinnen muss. Wir können, wie wir noch sehen werden, diesen Streit nicht einfach als eine profane Angelegenheit interpretieren, er hängt zusammen mit dem heiligen Streit der beiden Vögel auf dem Lebensbaum".

"Bei der Rechtssitzung ist aber auch die Djata [*one of the two highest gods*] vertreten, denn wenn die Ordnungen übertreten werden schenkt sie kein Gedeihen und Leben mehr bis die Tat gesühnt, die Schöpfung wiederholt und der Kosmos erneuert ist" (p. 115). "Es handelt sich auch hier um die Wiederholung des urzeitlichen Heilsgeschehens, denn die Wiederherstellung der verbrochenen Ordnungen ist nur möglich durch die Wiederholung der Schöpfung und die Erneuerung des ganzen Kosmos. In den beiden Gruppen, die sich feindlich gegenüberstehen, tritt die totale Gemeinschaft auf und die Richter sind die Vertreter der totalen Gottheit. Zwischen den beiden Parteien werden im balai [*corresponding to the sabhā*] die Gong aufgestellt und die heiligen Lanzen aufgerichtet. Sie sind ... identisch mit dem Lebensbaum. Die beiden Gruppen, die sich bekämpfen, sind identisch mit den beiden Vögeln auf dem Lebensbaum und ihr Streit ist eine Wiederholung des Streites zwischen den beiden Vögeln. ... Den wichtigsten Platz nimmt der Wortstreit ein, der leidenschaftlich geführt wird. Es fehlt dabei nicht an den grössten Beleidigungen und Beschuldigungen. Man macht den Gegner lächerlich und beschimpft ihn auf alle Weise. Der Streit wird aber auch mit den Waffen geführt und wenn man sich gegenseitig nicht mit Kugeln und Pfeilen beschiesst, so doch mit heiligen Mitteln, die über den Feind

Unheil und Verderben bringen sollen . . . Damit ist der heilige Streit beendet, aber damit ist auch die Schöpfung wiederholt, denn aus dem Streit und aus der Selbstvernichtung entsteht nicht das Nichts oder [das] Chaos, sondern der Kosmos. Mit dem Abschluss des Streites sind die Ordnungen wieder hergestellt und man kann wieder als ein neuer Mensch in einem neuen Kosmos und einer erneuerten Gemeinschaft ein neues Leben beginnen. Die Rechtssprechung lässt sich nur verstehen im Zusammenhang mit dem urzeitlichen Heilsgeschehen und dem schöpferischen Handeln der totalen Gottheit, denn sie ist deren Wiederholung und Dramatisierung" (p. 133).

From a somewhat different point of view W. B. Kristensen⁵⁵ has, in connection with the very word *vyāxana-*, characterized the role of eloquence as follows: "Eloquence had not quite the same meaning for the ancient peoples which it has for us. They did not associate the word with verbal art only, or with an artistic skill. The main thing to them was the authority of the spoken word, its wisdom and power, the success it was attended with. The eloquent word of the popular leader gave his audience the impression of absolute validity; it was authoritative, because one felt that it revealed a law of life. It was as irresistible and valid as the law of life itself. It was no mere beautiful sound, which existed only for a moment. Once pronounced it maintained itself: it created a new situation, it turned itself into reality. Eloquence, therefore, was nothing short of a creative force, a vital energy. Its essence was the mystery of Creation and Life". Kristensen was no doubt right in explaining in this way the use of *vyāxana-* as an epithet of Miθra, Sraoša and Nairyō.sagha, who "overcome the enemies of Mazdā in this world" (*op. c.*, p. 130). Thus Miθra is called *arš.vācāṇhām vyāxanām* "speaking correctly and eloquent" (Yt. 10.7), which reminds us of the words *arš.uxδō vāxš* discussed above. Still more instructive is Yt. 10.25

ahurām gufrām amavantām
dātō.saokām vyāxanām
vahmō.səndaṇhām bərəzantām
ašahunarām tanumqθrām . . .

"the Lord, who is profound and strong, *weal-giving* and eloquent, gratifier of prayers and high, *whose potency is great* and who is the

⁵⁵ In *De goddelijke Heraut en het Woord van God (Verzamelde Bijdragen tot kennis der antieke godsdiensten, Amsterdam, 1947, p. 129; first published in the Mededeelingen der Kon. Akad. v. Wetensch., 1930).*

incarnate Word” (cf. also Kristensen’s remarks, p. 130, and see now Gershevitch, *Avestan Hymn*, pp. 85, 179 ff.). Miθra is also celebrated as *spasəm taxməm vyāxanəm* “the watcher valiant and eloquent” Yt. 10.61. But Yt. 13.85 mentions along with the fravašis of Sraoša and Nairyō.sarha also that of Ātar (the Fire) in the words *yamca āθrō urvāzištahe, spəntahe vyāxanahe*. In this connection it may be called to mind that Ātar is the god who, like the Vedic Agni, bestows inspiration and *xšviwrəm hizvəm* (see above, p. 249).

Benveniste has already drawn attention to the passages where the gods are invoked to bestow sons who have authority among the people; cf. Y. 62.5 *frazantīm karšō.rāzəm vyāxanəm . . . qzō.būjim*, Yt. 13.52 *buyāt ahmi nmāne . . . buyāt nā stāhyō vyāxanō*, and Ny. 3.10, where it is said that the Moon

*daste narəm pourutātəm
stāhyanəm vyāxananəm
vanatəm avanəmnanəm
haθravanatəm hamərəθō*

“gives a great number of male children, firm and eloquent, victorious and undefeated, who smite at one stroke their opponents”.

From the preceding discussion of the Avestan evidence, the specific meaning of the technical terms will have become sufficiently clear. The word for the “ceremonial meeting” is *vyāxman-*, while the quality of the winner in the contest is denoted by *vyāxana-* “eloquent”. Cf. *vyāxanō vyāxmōhu gūšayaṭ.uxdō* Yt. 13.16. The verb is *vyāxmanyēiti* “to speak in a contest”; the words which the demon Snāviḍka speaks in defiance of Kərəsāspa before he is slain by the hero are introduced by the formula *hō avaθa vyāxmanyata*. Close parallels in the Homeric idiom are, e.g., B 597 στεῦτο γάρ εὐχόμενος νικησέμεν, A 388 ἤπειλυσεν μῦθον. Less clear are the three passages in the Tištr Yašt (Yt. 8.15, 17, 19): *hō iθa vyāxmanyēiti, hō iθa pərəsanyēiti: kō məm nūrəm frāyazāite . . . nūrəm ahmi yesnyasca vahmyasca ajuhe astvaite ašāt haca yaṭ vahištāt*. Bartholomae translates “Der hier spricht in der Versammlung, der hier stellt die Frage”; cf. Lommel: “Der geht dort mit sich zu Rate, der fragt sich dort”, Darmesteter: “Et là il convoque les hommes, il leur demande”. Now in 10–11 Tištrya has promised Ahura Mazdā to assist those men who will worship him. In 13 he makes his first appearance (*nūrəm!*) and claims libations with haoma and milk from them. He *openly declares* to be one who ought to receive sacrifice and prayer, but men do not fulfil his wish and, being consequently too weak, he is defeated by Apaoša

(22–24). Although it is hardly possible to ascertain the exact shade of meaning, it may be conjectured that *vyāxmanyēiti* here means “boasting he claims a new status”⁵⁶ (with reference to the words *nūrqm ahmi yesnyasca* etc.). We may again compare the Homeric verb ἀγοράομαι, also derived from the word for “meeting”, which means “to speak with authority” (ἀγορήσατο καὶ μετέειπεν),⁵⁷ sometimes implying the utterance of boastful words, cf. Θ 229–230 πῆ ἔβαν εὐχολαί . . . ἄς . . . κενεαυχέες ἡγοράεσθε.

As pointed out above (p. 251 f.), also *yāh-* must be reckoned among the technical terms of the ceremonial contest. It apparently denotes the contest itself (like *pərəšti-*). Cf. Yt. 11.3 *ahunō vairyō vacqm vərəθra-jastamō, aršuxδō vāxš yāhi vərəθra-jastamō* “The Ahuna Vairya is the most victorious (resistance-breaking) of words; when pronounced in the right way, it is the most victorious word in the contest”, and Yt. 13.108 *vyāxanahe . . . yāskərəstəmahe* (see above). The word *yāskərət-* is in all other passages of the Fravardin Yašt an epithet of the Fravašis (see 64, 75, 76). Bartholomae translates “der beim Schlusswerk . . . tätig ist”; Lommel mostly refrains from rendering it, but suggests “was (die Entscheidung?) bewirkt”. The word applies to persons (Yt. 13.108 and the Fravašis) and to words, cf. Yt. 1.1 *kaṭ asti maθrahe spəntahe amavas-təməm, kaṭ vərəθravastəməm, kaṭ xvarənañuhastəməm, kaṭ yāskərəstəməm* “What of the Holy Word has the greatest offensive power, what the most defensive? What is the most glorious? What is the most *yāskərət-*?” and in 1.5 *frōiṭ mē taṭ naqma framrūdi . . . yaṭ tē asti mazištəmca vahištəmca sraēštəmca yāskərəstəməmca . . .* “reveal unto me that name of thine . . . that is the greatest, the best, the fairest, the most *yāskərət-* . . .”. In Yt. 13.64 the Fravašis are said to be greater (*masyehiš*), stronger (*aojyehiš*), more valiant (*tašyehiš*), having a greater offensive and defensive power (*amavastarā, vərəθravastarā*), more healing (*baēšazyōtarā*) and more

⁵⁶ In this connection attention may be drawn to the description of the *owasa* (a potlatch-like ceremony) on Nias (Indonesia): “The person sponsoring the *owasa* exploits the situation to the fullest in showing the guests what he has accomplished, by strutting about the village square laden with jewelry, making speeches in praise of himself and/of relatives . . . while the guests look on with awe and admiration, and the kinsmen of the sponsor beam with pride and bask in glory. By showing off in this manner, the sponsor of the *owasa*, as in the potlatch, claims a new status and title, the validity of which . . . must come from those attending through approval of the sponsor’s feast” (P. Suzuki, *The religious System and Culture of Nias, Indonesia*, thesis Leiden 1959, p. 105).

⁵⁷ A classical description of ἀγορητύς as a source of social prestige occurs in Hom. θ 168 ff. For similar testimonies from the Latin literature (Tac. Dial. 8 *ipsa eloquentia, cuius numen et caelestis vis . . .*!) see, e.g., Wagenvoort, *Imperium*, p. 106.

yāskərət- than can be expressed by words. No more can be inferred from these passages but that *yāskərət-* denotes some power which is also present in certain words or formulas. While *yāskərət-* must mean "bringing about the *decision* in the *yāh-*", the last word itself seems to denote the (dangerous or critical situation of the) cosmic or social contest. Besides Yt. 11.3 it is met with in Yt. 13.41

kahmāiciṭ yāṇḥqm jasō

kahmāiciṭ qzanḥqm biwivā

These lines seem grammatically corrupt (dativus finalis? Cf. Y. 36.2 *nā mazištāi yāṇḥqm paitī.jamyā* "komm uns zu der grössten der Entscheidungen entgegen" Bartholomae, cf. Humbach, *MüSS.*, 9, p. 77), only the parallelism with *qzan-* "distress" is instructive (see p. 221). The use of the same word in Zarathustra's theological terminology will not be discussed here. As in analogous instances, Later Avestan may be expected to have preserved the older and common meaning of the word. Most of the Later Avestan passages are not conclusive, but those pointing to some connection with speech are significant. They allow us to reject most conjectures of its meaning that are merely based on etymologies, as "kriegerisches, gefährliches Unternehmen" (Baunack, *Studien*, p. 362), "kochen, Kochung" (Skt. *yas-*, Hertel, *Indo-Iran. Quellen u. Forsch.*, VI, p. 153, cf. Schwyzer, *IF.*, 47, 1927, p. 237), "der Gang zum Feuerordal, in dem Gott die künftige Entscheidung vollziehen wird" (Schaefer, *ZDMG.*, 94, 1940, p. 403, n. 2), "Opferumzug", "Bittgang" (Humbach, *MüSS.*, II, p. 13, n. 17, resp. VIII, p. 81, IX, p. 77). The semantic development remains obscure, but there can be no doubt as to its being an *ah-*noun from *yā-*.

C. THE ETYMOLOGY

The formal analysis of the first section leads us to posit two Indo-Iranian words, **vi-yāk-na-* and **vi-yāk-man-*. Since Nyberg has withdrawn his interpretation of Phl. *vyaxmān* in GrBd.⁵⁸, and since the v. 1. *vyaxma* Y. 57.12 is the only reading with a short vowel, there is no reason to take *yā-* as merely graphical for *ya-*.

Still Iran. *yāk-* has to be connected with IE. **yek-* "to declare solemnly". This meaning is still preserved in OHG. *jehan*, *gehan* "sprechen, aussagen, erklären, behaupten, bejahen, eingestehen, beichten" (cf. *jiht*, *bijiht* f. "Aussage, Bekenntnis", NHG. *Beichte*). In Old Saxon *gehan* means "to declare publicly" (e.g. *gihid that he god sī* "he declares

⁵⁸ *Hilfsbuch des Pahlavi*, p. 67,17; see, however, p. 265.

that he is God" Hël. 5104), while *begehan* has the connotation of a presumptuous declaration (e.g. *quidit that he Krist sī, kuning obar thit rīki, begihit ina sō grōtes* "he says that he is Christ, king over this kingdom, he presumes so much" Hël. 5194). Since this is the very meaning which we have to presuppose for Av. *vyāxana-*, this connection seems to stand firm. With the Germanic words (and with Welsh *iaith*, Breton *iez* "language", from **yekti-*) M. van Blankenstein has further connected Umbr. *iuku, iuka* "preces" (ntr. plur. of **ioko-*), Lat. *iocus* "joke" and Lith. *juōkas*, id.⁵⁹ The meaning of the Umbrian word can easily be explained from "solemn declaration". Indeed, Devoto renders the words *estu iuku habetu*, which are used as an introduction to a prayer, by "has orationes habeto".⁶⁰ The Latin word, however, which has long been taken as a cognate of it,⁶¹ has an aberrant meaning, which has induced some scholars to separate it from this word-family.⁶² We are here confronted with the first instance of the curious semantic developments which technical terms of the boasting contest may undergo. Bragging and mockery are the two requisites of the verbal contest all over the world. With Schärer's description of its function among the Dyaks we may compare such a classical instance of the Old Germanic *gilpcwide* as occurs in *Béowulf* 499 ff., where *Béowulf*, ridiculing *Unferð*, has the laugh on his side (611 f.). Lith. *juōkas* "joke, mockery, laughter", which points to a similar semantic development, is besides interesting because it shows the long root vowel which we had to assume for Av. *yāk-*. As one of the many semantic parallels we may quote Goth. *swaran* "to swear", Old Engl. *andswaru*, Old Saxon *antswōr* "answer": OChSl. *svariti* "ὀβερίζειν, λοιδορεῖν, μάχεσθαι", *svara* "rixa", *svarō* "μάχη".

The only word that presents serious difficulties is Skt. *yācate*. In the *Rigveda*, where its use is confined to the last three books (VIII³ IX² X³) it means "to ask, solicit, entreat" and refers to prayers to the gods, with the sole exception of VIII. 2.10 *sómāḥ . . . śukrá āśīraṁ yācante* "verlangen nach Milchmischung". This meaning can of course easily be explained from "taking a solemn vow to the gods with the simultaneous declaration of one's desires". Cf. Ved. *ā-sāste* "he asks" (*tvā* I. 30.10), "he prays for" (*tād* I. 24.11), Lat. *voveo* and Greek *εὐχομαι* "I pray", which have

⁵⁹ *IF*, 23, p. 131 ff. Generally accepted, cf. Pokorny, *Indogerm. etym. Wörterb.*, p. 503. Uhlenbeck controverted it in *Beitr. z. Gesch. d. deutschen Spr. u. Lit.*, 35 (1909), p. 168 f., on account of Lit. *juokiūtos, juōktis* "to laugh" and connected *jehan* with Skt. *yāśas-*.

⁶⁰ *Tabulae Iguvinae* (2nd ed.), p. 366 f.

⁶¹ R. von Planta, *Grammatik der oskisch-umbrischen Dialekte*, I, pp. 167, 411 f.

⁶² Uhlenbeck, p. 169; Devoto, p. 367.

developed similar meanings from that of “declaring solemnly”. From the Atharvaveda downwards the word is also used in the sense “to beg”. There is however the syntactical difficulty that even in the Rīgveda *yāc-* is construed with a double accusative, just like its synonym *yā-*. Cf.:

avas- + yāc-: tyān nú ... āva ādityān yāciṣāmahe VIII. 67.1,

tāt tvā yācāmahé 'vaḥ X. 22.7.

avas- + yā-: ṛcā yāmi ... devān āvo VIII. 27.1.

rayī + yāc-: rayīm ... indav indram asmābhyam yācatāt IX. 86.41.

rayī- + yā-: yāt tvā rayīm yāmi VIII. 3.11.

For this reason Grassmann and other scholars explained Ved. *yāc-* as consisting of *yā-* and a root determinative *-k-*.⁶³ Humbach similarly assumes an etymological connection with Av. *yās-*,⁶⁴ while at the same time identifying Gathic *yecā* (Y. 30.1c, 51.2a) with *yāc-*.⁶⁵ The Avestan evidence, however, shows the root to have a long vowel and since *yecā* can hardly stand for [*yācā*],⁶⁶ the old idea must definitively be discarded. In other respects too, Humbach's interpretation of *yecā* as “I offer” (based on AthS. XV. 13.8) seems incorrect: as I hope to discuss elsewhere, *aśā yecā ... urvāzā* in Y. 30.1 is a corrupt reading, which must have crept in during the early Sassanian period, for *aśahyaca ... urvāzā* [*ṛtahya ca ... vrāzā*] “and the bliss of Ṛta”. However, this does not remove the difficulty that Ved. *yāc-*, from its earliest occurrences downwards, shows a grammatical construction which must be due to the analogy of *yā-* (and *prcch-*). Traces of an older meaning than that of asking are indeed remarkably rare.

Most interesting, therefore, is the use of *abhiyācanā-* in the Buddh. Skt. compound *satyābhiyācanā-*, a synonym of *satyavacana-*, *satyā-dhiṣṭhāna-* “appeal to truth”. Edgerton records one occurrence in Divy. 154,5 *etam āryāḥ Kālaṁ rājakumāraṁ satyābhiyācanayā yathāpaurāṇaṁ kurudhvam iti*. He seems to have overlooked, however, that *satyopayā-*

⁶³ Grassmann, *Wörterb. zum RV*, col. 1107; W. P. Schmid, *IF*, 62 (1956), p. 228 f. (from *yā-* “to beg”, secondarily fused with *yā-* “to go”, cf. Gr. ἵκω).

⁶⁴ Av. *yās-*, an “inchoative” present of *yā-* (cf. *āpō yānəm vō yāsāmi* Y. 65.11). Humbach refers to *MüSS*, 8, p. 83. The same explanation has already been proposed by de Harlez, Per Persson (cf. *BB*, 19, p. 279), Meillet, *BSL*, 24, p. 114; cf. Morgenstierne, *NTS*, 12, p. 112.

⁶⁵ Resuscitating an idea of Bartholomae's, *GrIrPhil.*, I, 1, p. 174.

⁶⁶ As for *āyesē*, this does not stand for **āyāsē* (W. P. Schmidt, *IF*, 62, p. 235) but belongs to *ā-yam-* (*Altir. Wörterb.*, col. 1263), cf. OP. *āyasatā* and Nyberg, *Irans fornt. Religioner*, p. 499. Humbach's explanation of *yecā* Y. 30.1 had already been suggested by Kanga (rejected by Taraporewala, *Journ. K. R. Cama Or. Institute*, 12 (1928), p. 46).

Bombay ed.	Grantha rec.	v. Schlegel II. 55.6 = N. E. rec.	N.W. recension II. 59.4b–5a	N.E. recension II. 55.4b–5a
nil	nil		<i>tasyā nadyāḥ pare pāre nātidūre mahādrumaḥ +satyāpi +pāvitaḥ śrīmān nyagrodho haritacchadaḥ</i> st. 18	<i>tasyā nadyāḥ pare pāre nātidūre mahādrumaḥ satyābhiyācanaḥ śrīmān nyagrodho haritacchadaḥ</i> st. 18
nil	nil	nil	<i>yayāce taṁ tato 'bhyetya nyagrodhaṁ satyayācanam</i> II. 74.13	<i>yayāce taṁ tato 'bhyetya śyāmaṁ satyopayācanam</i> II. 70.14b–15a
II. 68.16	II. 68.16	II. 68.16	<i>samūlacaityam āsādyā vṛkṣaṁ satyopayācanam abhigamyā praṇamyainaṁ Trilīṅgāṁ viviśuḥ purīm</i>	<i>samūlaṁ caityam āsādyā vṛkṣaṁ satyopayācanam abhigamyā praṇamyainaṁ Bhūlīṅgāṁ viviśuḥ purīm</i>

*nikūlavṛkṣam āsādyā
divyaṁ satyopayācanam
abhigamyā 'bhivādyāṁ taṁ
Kulīṅgāṁ prāviśan purīm*

cana- is used in the same manner in Avad. 48,6 *tataḥ sapṭame divase . . . gomayamaṇḍalake klṭpe sarvagandhamālyeṣū 'pahṛteṣu pūrvataram tīrthakopāsakena satyopayācanam kṛtam: yena satyena . . . anena satyena . . . upagacchantv iti*. Similarly in 49,2.⁶⁷ In these words the original meaning of *yācana-*, viz. "solemn declaration" seems to have been preserved. If this is so, however, it is hard to account for the fact that *both* compounds also occur as variant readings in the Rāmāyaṇa, where they are epithets of holy trees. As their meaning cannot have been "die Bitten wahr machend, – gewährend" (Böhtlingk), their application as adjectives to trees remain unexplained. They are only attested in two passages. The relevant stanzas in the various recensions are quoted on page 260. Bharadvāja's advice that Sītā when passing by the holy fig tree, should pay homage to it (55.6 *tasmai sītā 'ñjalim kṛtvā prayuñjītā 'śiṣaḥ śivāḥ*, with vv.ll.; a different text in NW. 59.6 and NE. 55.6) seems to be an old motif of this story. All versions use the verb *yācate* more than once, cf. 55.21 *yācamānā*, 26 *avalokya tataḥ sītām āyācantīm aninditām*, and it recurs as *upa-yāc-* in Kālidāsa's reference to this passage in Raghuv. 13.53 *tvayā purastād upayācito yaḥ so 'yaṁ vaṭaḥ śyāma iti pratītaḥ*. In the different texts of the NW. and NE. recensions it also occurs thrice, cf. 59(55).6 *abhiyāceta*, 16 (a)*yācate 'dam kṛtāñjaliḥ*, 18 *yayāce taṁ tato 'bhyetya nyagrodham satyayācanam* (sic NW.!). In this passage, however, the epithet of the tree is lacking in the Bombay and Grantha editions, while von Schlegel (6 *satyābhiyācanaḥ*), the NW. recension (5 *satyāpi pāvitaḥ*, 18 *satyayācanam*) and the NE. recension (5 *satyābhiyācanaḥ*, 18 *satyopayācanam*) have it in three different forms and in different places of the episode. It would seem, accordingly, to be a later intrusion in this passage. On the other hand, in II. 68.16 (episode of the voyage of the messengers) *satyopayācanam* is found in *all* recensions. The later alterations in the text of II. 55 may be due to the wish to add the specification of the (Nikūla) tree found in the later episode of II. 68.

However, *satyopayācana-* cannot originally have conveyed the meaning which must in later times have been attached to it, viz. "fulfilling the wishes". As an adjective, it could only mean "whose wishes are true", which was no fitting epithet for a tree. On the other hand, *satyopayācana-* is quite clear in the sense of "Act of Truth", if taken as "solemn declaration of truth". The question must be raised, therefore, if the original reading of the second pāda of II. 68.16 may perhaps have been *kṛtvā satyopayācanam* (cf. Avad., p. 48,6!) instead of *vrkṣaṁ (divyaṁ) satyopayācanam*. The original reading, when it was no longer understood

⁶⁷ *-upavācana-* in Speyer's index is an error.

because of the obsolete word *upayācana*- “declaration”, may have been altered so as to turn the substantive into an adjectival epithet of the tree. The analogous use in Mahāv. III, p. 402, lines 1–5⁶⁸ may perhaps be taken as an indication that this Rāmāyaṇa-passage of II. 55 had come to be associated, as a well-known literary reminiscence, with prayers addressed to a fig-tree in general. The text of Mahāv. reads as follows: *tatra nyagrodhe yadṛcchayā puruṣeṇa upayācitam, tasya ca upayācanam samṛddham. tena tasya nyagrodhasya mahāpūjasatkāram kṛtam, tasya dāni puruṣasya dṛṣṭvā ’nukṛtim āpadyantā aparāpare ca striyo ca tatra nyagrodhe satyopayācanam ti kṛtvā upayācanti, sarvāye vārāṇasīye tam nyagrodham satyopayācanato abhijñāto, yo ca tatra nyagrodhe upayācati, tam tasya upayācanam samṛdhyati*. It is obvious that a line of argument resulting in an accumulation of hypotheses, none of which admits of verification, is not very attractive. On the other hand, it is very unlikely that the word *satyopayācana*- originally had the sense here assigned to it, and the whole explanation looks like a product of popular etymology. If so, the original meaning of the word, and the way in which it has come to be used in this context, can only be explained by means of some hypothesis.

The rare traces of *yāc*- “to declare solemnly” in Buddh. Skt., isolated though they are, justify further investigations. The sole passages for which Roth records an aberrant meaning occur in the AthS. They fall into two groups, one with the meaning “to offer”, and perhaps a second with the meaning “to promise”. Of the second group two of the three passages are fully inconclusive. In AthS. VI. 118.3 *yāsmā ṛṇām yāsya jāyām upāmi yām yācamāno abhyaṁmi devāḥ* and in 119.3 *ānājānan mānasā yācamāno yāt tātrāno āpa tāt suvāmi* Ludwig renders the participle by “flehend, bettelnd”, and Whitney by “begging”, but the context remains obscure. Cf. I *ādāsyān . . . samgrṇāmi*. In VII. 57.1 Sarasvatī is implored to fill up with ghee *yād āśāsā vādato me vicukṣubhé, yād yācamānasya cārato jānām ānu* “what has gone wrong on the part of me speaking with expectation, what of [me] going about among people begging” (Whitney; “bettelnd” Ludwig). Since the second (and last) stanza of this short hymn has been taken from RS. X. 113, the context of the first stanza is, again, not clear. It was later used in a rite which shows *yāc*- to have been taken in the sense of asking, but this may be secondary. The stanza is only mentioned because it *may* originally have referred to a failure to increase one’s social prestige.

⁶⁸ Prof. J. W. de Jong kindly drew my attention to this passage.

Less questionable is the meaning "to offer" in AthS. IX. 6, a hymn dealing with the entertainment of a Vrātya. It is met with in st. 4 *yád abhivádati, dīkṣám úpaiti, yád udakám yācaty, apāḥ prā ṇayati* "when he [the lord of guests] greets them, he enters upon consecration; when he offers water, he brings forward the [sacrificial] waters" (Whitney) and in st. 48 *ātithīn prāti paśyati, hīnkrṇoty; abhī vadati, prā stauty; udakám yācaty, úd gāyati* "[when] he meets the guests with his eyes; he utters *hīn*; [when] he greets [them], he preludes; [when] he offers water, he sings the *udgīthā*". Whitney's reasons for preferring the translation "I ask" in XV. 13.8 *asyai devātāyā udakám yācāmi* are not clear.

The most natural explanation of this meaning "to offer", which obviously cannot have secondarily developed from the meaning "to ask", is to take it as an independent semantic development of the older meaning "to declare solemnly". If so, this usage alone is sufficient to show that the meaning "to ask" cannot be the original one and that the etymology which connects *yāc-* with *yā-* must be rejected. From a formal point of view attention may be drawn to *yācñá-*, m.⁶⁹ or *yācñá-*, f., which has adopted the palatal of the present stem, while the original verbal noun **yāk-ná-* with a guttural survives in Av. [*vi-yāxna-*].

A few words remain to be said about Av. *vyāxana-*. While middle verb forms with *sam-* denote in Vedic a reciprocal relation, those with *vi-* express a separateness in space or time. This may simply imply an alternate action, e.g. I. 185.1 *vī vartete áhanī cakríyeva* "day and night turn round one after the other like two wheels", VI. 9.1 *áhaś ca kṛṣṇám áhar árunam ca vī vartete rájaś vedyábhiḥ*. Cf. the active verb *vi-car-*, which means "auf verschiedenen Seiten getrennt gehen" (Lüders, *Philologica Indica*, p. 764) rather than "abwechselnd gehen" (Ludwig, translation of VI. 49.3). However, this separateness may imply a hostile attitude, e.g. VIII. 1.4 *vī tartūryante maghavan vipaścīto* "Es eilen in verschiedener Weise (i.e. wechselseitig sich bekämpfend) vorwärts..." (Thieme, *Der Fremdling im RV.*, p. 51), *vikurute* "acts in a hostile way" (Mhbb., see S. K. De, *BDCRI*, VIII, p. 27). In this way we must apparently also interpret KS. VIII. 7 (p. 90,11) *gām ghnanti, tām vidīvyante, tām sabhā-sadbhya upaharanti*. The middle form with *vi-* (cf. MS IV. 4.6, p. 57,10, as against the parallel version *gām asya tād áhaḥ sabhāyām dīvyeyuḥ*

⁶⁹ KS.KKS. (see Oertel, *Zur Kapiṣṭhala-Kaṭha-Saṁhitā*, p. 62) and AthS. Also written *yācīyá-*, cf. Wackernagel-Debrunner, *Altind. Gramm.*, II/2, p. 732 f., *Nachträge* ad I, pp. 153,19 and 186,12; Wackernagel, *Kleine Schriften*, p. 289; Renou, *Grammaire védique*, pp. 58, 61.

MS. I. 6.11, p. 104,6)⁷⁰ stresses both the reciprocity and the competition of this game. The variant *vidīvyanti* KapKS. VII. 4 (p. 75,2), Patañjali on Pāṇ. II. 3.60, probably reflects a later linguistic stage. Now the same meaning is met with in several combinations of *vi-* with a *verbum dicendi*,⁷¹ e.g. *mitho vivadamānayoḥ* Manu 8.109, 9.250. The Indo-Iranian word **vi-yāk-na-* accordingly presupposes a verb **vī yācantai* “they declare solemnly in defiance of each other”. An analogous noun formation in *-na-* of the Vedic language is, e.g., *vi-drā-ṇa-* (KS.), which does not mean “awakened” (*PW.*, etc.) but “having run in different directions, dispersed” (see K. Hoffmann, *III*, IV, p. 21 n. 12); cf. *vidruta-*. After roots ending in *-k-*, however, derivatives with the morpheme *-na-* are extremely rare in Vedic; see Wackernagel-Debrunner, *Altind. Gramm.*, II/2, p. 729. In conclusion it should be observed that Tokh. B. *yak* “demander, mendier” (Duchesne-Guillemin, *BSL*, 41, p. 148) does not prove the existence of an IE. root **yek-* “to beg” since the Tokharian word is non-existent according to Couvreur, *Revue belge de phil. et d’hist.*, 23 (1944), p. 233.

III. Vedic *vīvāc-* and *vigadā-*

1. The Indian institution that can be paralleled with the Iranian *vyāxman-* is, as pointed out above, the *sabhā-*. Besides the *sabhā* there existed also the *sāmiti-*.⁷² The circumstance that both are called daughters of Prajāpati (AthS. VII. 12.1) shows that each of them had a distinct place in the whole mythical conception of the world. Indeed, whenever mention is made of two groups of sons (the Devas and the Asuras),⁷³ or of two wives (Kadrū and Vinatā, YV. Mhbh.) of Prajāpati, the number two always reflects the fundamental cosmic dualism of upper world (Heaven) and nether world. The conclusion that *sabhā* and *sāmiti*, as the two daughters of Prajāpati, also represent the two cosmic moieties, which again must have found its expression in their different social roles,

⁷⁰ See however Oertel, *Zur Kapiṣṭhala-Kaṭha-Saṁhitā*, p. 66, who suggests (like Caland, *WZKM*, 23, p. 53) that the authentic reading may have been *vidīvyeyuḥ*. See also Delbrück, *Altind. Synt.*, p. 178.

⁷¹ See Delbrück, *Altind. Syntax*, p. 465 f.

⁷² See Ludwig, *Der Rig Veda*, III, p. 253 ff.; W. Rau, *Staat und Gesellschaft im alten Indien*, p. 82.

⁷³ PB. XVIII. 1.2, ŚBM. II. 1.1.8; 1.2.13, XIV. 4.1.1, etc., BAU. 1.3.1, ChU. 1.2.1, KS. IX. 11 (p. 112,8), MS. I. 9.3 (p. 132,16).

seems inevitable. Ludwig conjectures that the *sámiti* was especially reserved for the *vís-*, which could be understood if the *sámiti* was connected with the nether world.⁷⁴ As for the *sabhdá*, most details are still obscure. It would seem rather certain that the place where the social contests were fought was a sacred one,⁷⁵ if the social contest here fought was a replica of the primordial fight between the Devas (Indra) and the Asuras. It must be admitted, however, that the actual evidence of the brāhmaṇa-texts does not allow us to prove this. See Rau, *op. c.*, p. 75 ff., but cf. Held, *The Mahabharata*, p. 202 ff.

Apart from all conjectures, however, we may state that just as the Iranians prayed for a son who was valiant and *vyāxana-*, so the Indians longed for a son who was *sabhéya-*.⁷⁶ The well-known prayer of the Aśvamedha⁷⁷ runs as follows: *á bráhman brāhmaṇó brahmavarcaś jāyatām, á 'smín rāṣtré rājanya īṣavyāḥ śúro mahārathó jāyatām, dógdhri dhenúr, vódhā 'nadván, āśúḥ sāptiḥ, púramdhir yóṣā, jiṣṇú ratheṣṭhā, sabhéyo yúvā, 'syá yájamānasya víró jāyatām* "In this kingdom may a prince be born, an archer, a hero, and a great car-fighter; a milk cow, a draught ox; a swift racer, a *púramdhi*, a victorious warrior, a *sabhéya*, may a hero be born to this sacrificer". The true meaning of *sabhéya*-was no longer fully known to the authors of the brāhmaṇas, which suggests that the term belonged to a form of society that had ceased to exist. Cf. ŚBM. XIII. 1.9.8 *eṣá vai sabhéyo yúvā yāḥ prathamavayaś, tásmāt prathamavayaś strīṇām priyó bhāvukaḥ*, TB. III. 8.13.1 *yó vai pūrvavayaś sá sabhéyo yúvā, tásmād yúvā púmān priyó bhāvukaḥ* and such commentaries as Mādhava on RS. I. 91.20: *vidathyām sabhéyam*, viz. *yajñasabhayoś ca yaḥ svakīrti*, Sāy. *ibid.*: *sabhāyām sādhum, sakalāśāstrābhijñām ity arthaḥ*, *idem* ad TB. II. 8.1.3: *sabhāyām sādhuḥ*, Mahīdhara ad VS.: *sabhāyām yogaḥ* (Keith: "a youth fit for the assembly").

It seems to me that Zimmer's rendering by "schlagfertig" is still the nearest approach to the meaning which must have been attached to the word. Rau, in his important discussion, reverts to "gesellschaftsfähig, gesittet" (*PW.*). In the first place, however, it should be observed that TB. and ŚBM. differ in so far as only the last text adds *strīṇām priyó bhāvukaḥ*, which induced Eggeling, *SBE*. XLIV, p. 295, to translate

⁷⁴ See however Rau, *op. c.*, p. 82 f. [Note Āp. Dh. Sū. II. 25.5 *dakṣiṇena purāṇ sabhā!*]

⁷⁵ See Held, *The Mahabharata*, p. 233.

⁷⁶ See Ludwig, *op. c.*, III, p. 254 f.; Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben*, p. 174; Rau, *op. c.*, p. 77.

⁷⁷ TS. VII. 5.18, KSA. V. 14, MS. III. 12.6. VS. 22.22, VSK. 24.30.

sabhéyo yúvā as “a blitheful (or sociable) youth”. Evidently the word *sabhéya-* must have meant “member of (and probably, successful speaker in) the *sabhā*”. Now, what a speaker in the *sabhā* wished most of all appears from AthS. VI. 12.2 *té me santu sāvācasah*: it was the assent of all members. This is also what the Śāṅkh. Ār. 8.9 expresses in the words *sa ya evam etāṁ daivāṁ vīṇāṁ veda śrutavadanatamo bhavati, bhūmiprā 'sya kīrtir bhavati, śuśrūṣante hā 'sya parṣatsu bhāṣ[y]amāṇasye 'dam astu yad ayam ihate, yatrā 'ryā vāg vadati vidur enam tatra* (cf. Ait. Ār. III. 2.5). In JB. I. 271¹⁸ the various aspects of social prestige are expressed by the words *priyaḥ, śreṣṭhaḥ, grāmaṇiḥ* and *kīrtiḥ* (cf. *jyeṣṭhaś ca ha vai śreṣṭhaś ca svānām bhavati* Śāṅkh. Ār. 10.2). Such a speaker may be said to be *priyo bhāvukāḥ* “disposed to be popular”. As it seems certain that these words had no erotic connotation at all, the question may be raised if the curious addition *strīṇām* in ŚB. is perhaps due to the preceding gloss on the words *pūramdhir yōṣā*, viz. *yōṣty evā rūpām dadhāti, tasmād rūpiṇi yuvatīḥ priyā bhāvukā* “whence the beautiful maiden is apt to become dear (to men)”.

It is not possible to enter into a discussion of Rau's arguments, but we should like to point out that in the formula of the Yajurveda *yád grāme yád áraṇye yát sabháyām yád indriyé | yád énaś cakṛmá vayám* the word *sabháyām* hardly means “in public” (in der Öffentlichkeit) but rather denotes something apart both from the public life in the village and from the forest. Since the opposition cannot be one between “public” and “private”, it may be suggested that the reference is rather to the sacred character of the *sabhā* and all that is performed in it, in contradistinction to the profane life. Nor am I convinced that TS. III. 4.8.5f. proves the *sabhā* to have been a “cow-shed”, although it is certainly difficult to account for the *tīṇāni* in the *sabhā*.^{77a} From I. 7.6.7 *paśávaḥ khálu vai brāhmaṇasya sabhā* “Vieh ist ja fürwahr die *sabhā* eines *brāhmaṇa*” we can only infer that wealth of cattle and horses affords the right to build one's own *sabhā*: *áva sabhām runddhe, prá sahasraṁ paśūn āpnoty, á 'sya prajāyām vājī jāyate (vājīn-* “winner of a potlatch”? see p. 240). Our study may further have shown that “Gewandtheit in der Versammlung” can indeed have been an ideal of the ancient Indian education (Rau, p. 77). These remarks do not detract from the value of Rau's very instructive book.

In addition to the preceding remark on *sabhéya-* in the *brāhmaṇas* it may be observed that in the Yajurvedic prayer the son is hoped to be a

^{77a} For cows in the *sabhā* see p. 278.

good milk-yielding cow (*dógdhrī dhenúh*), a draught horse (*vódhā 'naḍyān*) and a race horse (*āśúh sāptih*).^{77b} The first and third of these terms depict the young *rājanyā*- as a lord who gives rich *dakṣiṇās* and who is victorious: running a race was indeed a means of deciding a dispute.⁷⁸ So he is expected to win the goods of his opponents as a good racing horse. The same idea is then expressed in a more direct way: while *jīṣṇū ratheṣṭhāh* and *sabhéyo yúvā* obviously refer to his victoriousness in chariot races and verbal contests, *púranidhir yóṣā* characterizes him as a munificent young lord. *Púranidhi*-, indeed, the opposite of *arāti*-, means "present-giving": attempts to find other meanings or connotations such as "poetical inspiration" will prove misleading. The young lord is conceived of as personifying some ancient mythological figures, the cosmic Cow and the "Woman Present-giving" (just as Uṣas is said to have become a *dhenú*- for Yama, TS. IV. 3.11). In this connection it may be useful to compare the so-called *diśān kṛptayaḥ* (AthS. XX. 128.1-5, GB II. 6.12: p. 263,8), the first stanza of which runs as follows: *yāh sabhéyo vidathyāh sūtva yājvā ca pūruṣaḥ*, while st. 5 reads *yé ca devāñ āyajantā 'tho yé ca parādadūh | sūryo divam iva gatvāya maghāvāno vi rapśante*. Munificence and victoriousness (in battles as well as in word-duels) are the characteristic traits of the ideal young hero in many archaic civilizations. In the Anglo-Saxon gnomic verses⁷⁹ we meet with such stanzas as

*geongne æþeling sceolan góde gesiðas
byldan tó beaduwe and tó béahgife*

"good comrades should encourage the young lord to battle and to ring-giving" and the *Béowulf* resumes the Old Germanic ideal (which was that of the Homeric heroes) in the words (287 ff.):

*æghwæðres sceal
scearp scyldwiga gescád witan
worda ond worca, sé þe wel þenceð*

In quite the same way Bhartṛhari 14 (ed. Kosambi 1948) still opposes *sadasi vākpaṭutā* to *yudhi vikramaḥ*. Since similar phenomena are met with in non-Indo-European societies,⁸⁰ the concordance between the testimonies of Old Indian, Greek and Old Germanic texts does not in

^{77b} See however the quite different translation of this passage by Oldenberg, *Rel. d. Veda*, p. 370.

⁷⁸ Oertel, *Trans. Conn. Acad.*, 15 (1909), p. 174; cf. JB. I. 213⁵, AB. IV. 7.4, KB. 18.1.

⁷⁹ H. Sweet, *An Anglo-Saxon Reader*³, p. 168 f.

⁸⁰ See H. Schärer, *Die Gottesidee der Ngadju-Dajak in Süd-Borneo*, pp. 46, 89.

itself prove the proto-Indo-European character of these phenomena, although they are likely to reflect an aspect of the proto-Indo-European civilization. Cf. M. Mauss, *Sociologie et Anthropologie*, p. 242.

The interpretation of *sabhēya-* as “a successful speaker” may find a support in JB. I. 261–262, where it is stated that the son of an *udgātr-* who knows the identity of *manas-* and *retasyā-* is *mahāmanā manasvī*, the son of him who knows the identity of *cakṣuṣ-* and *triṣṭubh-*, or of *śrotra-* and *jagatī-*, is *ahrītamukhī paśyo dṛṣṭyā . . . darśanīyaḥ*, resp. *śuśrūṣuś śrotriyeṇa . . . śravaṇīyaḥ*, while it concludes with the words *atha yo “vāg anuṣṭubh” iti vidvān udgāyati, śasto ’dgātā vāco ’rarddhy(?) asmād ājāyate sabheyaḥ* “To him who knowing that Vāc is identical with the anuṣṭubh sings as an *udgātr*, a son is born who is a reciter (read *śamstā?*), a chanter, who accomplishes with his word (read *upārdhy?*), and who is a *sabheya-*.”

With this interpretation is also in harmony RS. II. 24.13 *sabhēyo vipro bharate matī dhānā* “Als Wortführer in der Versammlung beliebt trägt er [viz. Bṛhaspati] durch Einsicht die Gewinne davon”, where Zimmer’s rendering “ein schlagfertiger Sänger” might be amended into “ein schlagfertiger Redner” (for *vipra-* cf. *viprām jyōtīṃsi*, etc.). The same meaning suits I. 91.20 *sómo dhenūm sómo árvantam āśūm sómo vīrām karmanyām dadāti | sādanyām vidathyām sabhēyam pitṛśrávaṇam yó dādāśad asmai* (see Ludwig, *Der RV.*, III, 254). For the juxtaposition of *vidathyā-* cf. AthS. XX. 128.1 quoted above.

2. Vedic *vívāc-*.

The Vedic verb most closely corresponding to Av. *vi-yāc-* is *vi-vac-*, which means in the middle forms “to dispute with one another about (loc.)”. Cf. RS. VI. 31.1 *vī toké apsū tánaye ca sūrē ’vocanta carṣaṇāyo vīvācaḥ* “Die Stämme sind um den Samen, um Wasser und leibliche Nachkommenschaft, um die Sonne streitend in Streit geraten”. Like the middle of *vi-vac-* the verbal noun *vívāc-* is (apart from three occurrences in AthS. XX) exclusively attested in the Rigveda. Since this is also the case with all other terms of the potlatch-ceremonies, we are driven to the conclusion that the Rigvedic society differed considerably from the later forms of social life as reflected by the other Vedas. Such terms as *sabheya-*, which survive in later Vedic texts may have come to refer to different situations in which a man could manifest the power of his words. The meaning of *vívāc-* was according to Grassmann “Streit, Schlacht, Wettkampf”, which was more correct than “widerstreitender Ruf, Streit” (Roth, Wackernagel, *Altind. Gramm.* II/1, p. 261). Since *vac-* does not mean “cry, scream, yell”, the suggested meaning “opposing

shout" (Monier-Williams) must be ruled out and only "contest, fight" can be retained as the true meaning.

The question may be raised, why the archaic Rigvedic forms of social life have left so few traces in the later texts. This may possibly be connected with fundamental changes in the Vedic religion. If our conclusion that the Rigvedic religion was centred about the rites of annual renewal at the winter solstice is correct, this form of religion inherited from pre-Indian times must soon have been replaced by another ritual more in harmony with "l'Inde des moussons". On Indian soil the ancient myth of Indra slaying Vṛtra, and the winter ritual celebrating this event, were bound to lose their meaning. This, however, is a hypothesis which only profound investigations into the development of the Vedic cult might prove to be correct. We may here confine ourselves to the statement that such terms as -vivāka- (AB. TB.), vivācana- (ŚBK., AA. JUpB.), vivacana- (ŚBM. JB) "decision, authority", vivaktṛ- "Verbesserer" are all based on the active form *vi vivakti* "he declares, corrects", while the middle 3 Du. *vi *vivacāte*^{80a} "they dispute with one another" and its verbal noun *vivāc-* are confined to the oldest texts.

In the first place *vivāc-* refers to Indra's cosmic fight. Cf. III. 34.10 *indra oṣadhīr asanod āhāni vānaspātīṃr asanod antārikṣam | bibhēda valām nunudē vivācō 'thābhavad damitā 'bhikratūnām*. The whole hymn extols Indra's cosmic function; he is a "Finder des Gutes" (st. 1 *vidādvasuḥ*), a winner of the sun, who found the light (st. 4 *svarṣḍh, āvindaj jyōtiḥ*) and gave inspiration to the invoker (st. 5 *ācetayad dhiya imā jaritrē*), who has won Earth and Heaven (st. 8), the race horses, the Sun and a wealth of gold, while slaying the *dasyus* and assisting the *Āryas* (st. 9). Now the frequent juxtaposition of the words *vṛtrāṇi* and *dāsyavaḥ, śātravaḥ, amitrāḥ* in the Rigveda points to the conclusion that the Aryans conceived their battles against the Dasyus as a reiteration, a replica, of Indra's mythic fight. Although it is advisable in principle to omit all reconstructions of possibly underlying ideas which are not explicitly stated in our texts, the fact that the Rigveda often associates the ideas of war and contest allows us to conjecture that war, no less than present-giving, contests and chariot-races, was thought of as stimulating the creative forces of the Cosmos during the winter ritual. In this connection

^{80a} The same semantic relation exists between *vi-bravīti* "he declares, explains" and *vi brūte*, which functions as the Rigvedic present of *vi vac-* but is no longer used in later texts (sole occurrence in VI. 25.4 *toké vā gōṣu tānaye yād apsū vi krāndasī urvārāsu brāvaitē*, cf. VI. 31.1 *vi toké apsū tānaye ca sūrē 'vocanta carṣaṇāyo vivācaḥ*!).

some passages from G. W. Locher's thesis on "The Serpent in Kwakiutl Religion", p. 81 f. may be instructive: "But if the giving away of copper pieces is a sacrificial act, it follows that the whole exchange traffic of the potlatch is, really, nothing but one great sacrificial rite... But then this act was also a rebirth rite, a passing on to a new phase of life. ... This notion of passing on to a new phase of life we also found in the winter ritual. As a matter of fact, the very principle of the potlatch is intimately bound up with the root idea of the winter ritual. Just as light and life, so also honour and wealth are acquired through destruction and ruin... Besides the conception of sacrifice, also the idea of combat belongs to the most essential elements of the potlatch complex. Both potlatch and war are under the sway of the serpent and may even replace each other."

This explains why the poet of III. 34, after mentioning the battles between Aryans and Dasyus in st. 9, immediately passes on to their mythic prototype in the next stanza. The masculine verbal noun *vívāc-* must have denoted the opponent in a word duel but since Indra's fight was the prototype of the ceremonial contest, he, as a *damitá'bhíkratūnām*, could be said to have dispelled his *vívācs* and thereby to have won the day-light (*āhāni*, cf. *svarśdh* in st. 4) out of the darkness of the primordial Chaos. The Old Aryan winter ritual was indeed a mere replica of the primordial *vívāc-* between the cosmic powers of nether world and upper world, and that is why the prize of the battle between the *cārṣaṇāyo vívācaḥ* in VI. 31.1 (see above) could be said to be virility, progeny, water and Sun.^{80b}

Without entering into a discussion of the word *cārṣaṇī-*, which would require a separate study, we proceed to consider VI. 33, which invokes Indra's assistance against Dāsa as well as Aryan opponents (st. 3 *ubhāyāṁ amltrān, dāsā vṛtrāṇy āryā ca*). Stanza 2 runs as follows *tvām hīndrā 'vase vīvāco hāvante cārṣaṇāyaḥ śūrasātau | tvām viprebhir ví paññīr aśāyas tvōta it sánitā vājam ārvā* "Denn dich, Indra, rufen die streitenden Völker zum Beistand (im Kampf) um den Heldenpreis. Du bist durch die Redekundigen mit den Paṇi's (Knausern) fertig geworden. Von dir begünstigt gewinnt der Renner den Siegespreis". Instead of "Heldenpreis" we may rather interpret *śūrasāti-* as "obtainment of valiant sons", cf. VI. 31.1 *tānaye*, VII. 23.6 *vīravad*, etc. While here the fight against the *Paṇis* is apparently put on a level with chariot races, the cosmic

^{80b} A classical instance of this cosmic *vívāc-* which founded Indra's new status is RS. IV. 42. For a different interpretation of the "assaults de vanteries ou d'insolences" between Indra and Varuṇa see Dumézil, *Les dieux des indo-européens*, p. 83.

importance of such fights stands out more clearly in VII. 30.2 *hávanta u tvā hávyam vívāci tanūṣu śūrāḥ sūryasya sātaū | tvām víśveṣu sēnyo jāneṣu tvām vṛtrāṇi randhayā suhāntu* “Dich rufen sie, den Rufenswerten im Wettstreit, die Helden (im Kampf) um ihre Leiber, um die Sonne zu gewinnen. Du bist bei allen Völkern der Heeresgott. Gib die Feinde in (unsere) Gewalt, dass sie leicht zu erschlagen seien.” If we are ready to admit that the Vedic poets were speaking about something definite and did not merely repeat ancient poetic formulas devoid of real sense, these words can only be taken to refer to a winter ritual, a ceremonial contest inaugurating the new year. Similar allusions to contests associated with the winning of the sun are frequent, cf. e.g. VI. 46.4 *asmākam bodhy avitā mahādhanē tanūṣv apsū sūrye* “Sei uns Schützer im grossen Kampf um die eigenen Leiber, um Wasser und Sonne!“. The same situation is also suggested by the context of VII. 23.2 *āyāmi ghōṣa indra devājāmīr irajyānta yāc churūdho vívāci | nahī svām āyus cikité jāneṣu tānīd āmhāmsy āti paśy asmān* “Das den Göttern vertraute Geschrei hat sich erhoben, o Indra, da über die Gewinne im Wettstreit entschieden wird; denn unter den Menschen wird die eigene Lebensdauer nicht gekannt. So hilf du über diese Ängste hinweg!” The exact meaning of *śurūdha irajyante*, obviously a technical expression of the potlatch terminology, is unknown. The active form *irajyān* X. 140.4 is translated by “waltend”, “anführend”, “freischaltend”, and the adjective *irajyū-* by “gebietend”.⁸¹ Therefore Oldenberg’s translation “Gelenkt worden ist das Getön, dem die Götter verschwistert sind, o Indra, als sich die Güter (Speisen?) zur Verfügung stellten beim Streit der Reden” seems more correct. In any case some inferences seem sufficiently certain. There is a verbal contest (*vívāc-*), this time between priestly poets (*Vasiṣṭha*, st. 1), which is likened to a real battle and therefore called a *samaryā-* (st. 1); the *brāhmāṇi* have arisen in a strife for social prominence (*śrāvasyā-*, st. 1), the prizes (*śurūdhaḥ*) have been put up, and at this very moment the poet’s thoughts are struck by the idea of Death, of a crisis which has to be overcome. Since there must be a natural association between this contest of priests and the crisis (*āmhās-*), and since the notions of *āmhās-*, *duritā-* are closely linked up with that of *tāmas-* (see p. 221), we are again driven to the conclusion that this *vívāc-* took place at the inauguration of the new year. The *Vasiṣṭhas* implore the assistance of Indra (6ab *evéd indram vṛṣaṇam vājrabāhuṁ vasiṣṭhāso abhy ārcanty arkaiḥ*), who is expected to bestow the prizes on them in reward of their praises, cf. 4d *tvām hī*

⁸¹ Cf. Grassmann, *Wörterb. zum Rig-Veda*, resp. Geldner, *Glossar*, s.v. and *Übersetzung*, a.l.; Neisser, *Zum Wörterb. des Rgveda*, I, p. 163.

dhībhir dāyase vi vājān, 6c *sā na stutó vīrávad dhātu gómad*. The *ghoṣaḥ* (*devājāmiḥ*) in st. 2 is more likely to be the *ghoṣā ulūlavah* (see p. 235) of the people who by being *sumānasaḥ* contribute to the rebirth of the Sun than “das Geschrei um Hilfe” (Geldner).⁸² Reflexes of the “magical” importance of gaiety (see p. 278) may be seen in IV. 4.9 *krīlantas tvā sumānasaḥ sapema*, VI. 52.5 *viśvadānīm sumānasaḥ syāma paśyema nū stūryam uccārantam* (? cf. X. 37.7, I. 92.6), VII. 78.5 *prāti tvādyā sumānaso budhantā ’smākāso maghāvāno vayām ca*. Attention may be drawn to the fact that besides the prizes (*vājān*, *gómad*), which apparently were identical with the *śurūdhaḥ* referred to in st. 2, mention is also made of a *vīrávad* (sc. *dhānam*), which may be equated to *tānaye* VI. 31.1, *śūrasātau* VI. 33.2.

The *vājas* are again mentioned in VI. 45.29 *purūtāmam purūṇām stotṛñām vīvāci | vājebhir vājayatām* “Zu ihm, dem Ersten unter vielen im Wettstreit der vielen Sängern, die um die Siegespreise wetteifern”. Though being a *vīvāc-* of priestly poets, this was not a mere poetical contest. In the preceding hymn of the same poet there is again a reference to the deliverance from *ānīhas-* and to blessing with progeny, cf. VI. 44.16 *vy āsmād dvēṣo yuyāvad vy ānīhaḥ*, and 18b–d *asmābhyam māhi vārivaḥ sugām kaḥ | apām tókasya tānayasya jeśā indra sūrīn kṛṇuhī smā no ardhām* “schaff uns grosse Freibahn und gute Fahrt, . . . Wenn es gilt, Wasser, leiblichen Samen zu gewinnen, so nimm für unsere Gönner Partei, Indra!”. In VI. 45 the poets’ contest and the chariot races are apparently two forms of one and the same ceremonial strife. Cf. 12 *dhībhir ārvadbhir ārvato vājān indra śravāyyān | tvādyā jeśma hitām dhānam*, 14 *tāyā* (scil. *ūtī*) *no hinuhī rātham*, 15 *sā rāthena rathītamo ’smākenā ’bhiyūgvānā | jēsi jiṣṇo hitām dhānam*. Most clearly this parallelism is expressed in st. 2 *avipré cid váyo dādhad anāśūnā cid ārvatā | indro jētā hitām dhānam* “Auch dem Unberedten verleiht er Schwung, auch mit dem langsamen Rennpferd gewinnt Indra den ausgesetzten Preis”. As a matter of fact, Indra grants his support in both forms of the contest because he presides over it and decides it (st. 20 *sā hī viśvāni pārthivān ēko vāsūni pātyate*). This is the reason why both forms of support are sometimes mentioned in one and the same stanza, e.g. I. 178.3 *jētā nṛbhir indraḥ pṛtsu śūraḥ śrótā hávaṁ nādhamānasya kārōḥ | prābhartā rātham dāśuṣa upākā údyantā giro yādi ca tmānā bhūt* “Indra, der Held, ist mit den Männern Sieger in den Schlachten; er erhört den Ruf des in Nöten befindlichen Dichters. Er bringt den Wagen des freigebigen Opferers voran, ihm dicht zur Seite (bleibend), und er erhöht die Lob-

⁸² Mādhava: *stutiśabdaḥ*; Sāyaṇa: *stutirūpaḥ śabdaḥ*.

reden, wenn er in eigener Person erscheint". See also p. 236. f. This is not "Opferconcurrentz... in das Bild des Wettrennens gekleidet" (Geldner, *Ved. Studien*, II, p. 163) but a reflex of the different aspects of Indra as the god presiding over the winter ritual. As pointed out above (p. 237), the poets do not act on their own account but on behalf of their patrons (*sūri-*). As the contest was between parties, the poet who was victorious in the verbal contest in the *sabhā* was a *kilbiṣaspṛt* for his party (X. 71.10).

The same idea recurs in I. 178.4 *evā nṛbhir indraḥ suśravasyā prakhādāḥ prkṣō abhī mitrīṇo bhūt | samaryā iṣā stavate vīvāci satrākaro yājamānasya śāmsaḥ* "Also übertrifft Indra mit seinen Mannen im Drang nach Ruhm als starker (Feinde)vertilger alle, die Freundschaft halten. Im Kampf, im Wettstreit um den Speisegenuss (*dākṣiṇā!*) wird er gepriesen als der, der ganze Arbeit macht, er des Opfers Preis!" Although several details remain obscure (e.g. *mitrīṇo*), the parallelism between Indra's *suśravasyā*- and the *iṣō vīvāci* seems obvious.

In connection with our suggestion that *vīvāc-* ceased to be used in later Vedic texts because the potlatch-like type of contest had become obsolete, it might be of some interest that the only occurrence in the tenth book of the Rigveda could be interpreted in a different way: if so, its use would have to be regarded as a reminiscence of the older literature, whose true meaning was no longer known. In X. 23.5 *yō vācā vīvāco mṛdhrāvācaḥ purū saḥāsrā śivā jaghāna | tā-tad id asya paūṃsyam grṇīmasi* the possibility that the word has been taken in the sense of *vīvācas-* (AthS. XII. 1.45 *jānam... bahudhā vīvācasam* "people of different speech") cannot be entirely ruled out. Probably, however, it is also here used in its common meaning. Geldner translates: "Der mit dem (blossen) Wort die Widerredenden, die Missredenden, die vielen tausend Feinde erschlug. Diese und jene Mannestat von ihm besingen wir...". The words *vācā... jaghāna* are an interesting formula characterizing the cosmic fight as a word duel. The Atharvavedic occurrences of *vīvāc-* are literal quotations from the Rigveda, viz. XX. 11.10; 12.2; 73.6 corresponding to RS. III. 34.10, VII. 23.2 and X. 23.5.

3. Instead of Rigvedic *vī vac-* later texts (since TB., ŚB.) use *vi-vadate* in the sense "to be at variance, contest, litigate, dispute with someone about (loc.)". The derivative *vivāda-*, m. (since ŚvB. V. 3.2) means "a dispute, quarrel, contest", later particularly "a contest at law, legal dispute, litigation, lawsuit". The word *vīvāc-*, as a technical potlatch-term, had died out with the institution it denoted.

On the other hand the *hapax legomenon* *vigadā-*, which is a word of the

Rigvedic language, seems still to reflect the older form of social life. It occurs in X. 116.5 *ugráya te sáho bálaṁ dadāmi praṭṭīyā śātrūn vigadēṣu vṛśca*. Grassmann rendered it "etwa Schlacht" Böhrtlingk, *pw*, VI, p. 81, "Geschrei, ein Durcheinander von Rufen", while Geldner in a note on his translation remarks: "wenn von *gad* 'sprechen', eigentlich Wortstreit = *vivāda*, *vivāc*". He accordingly translates the stanza: "Ich gebe dir [viz. Indra], dem Gewaltigen, Überlegenheit und Kraft; tritt den Feinden entgegen und zerhaue sie im Streit". Renou, *Et. véd.* I, p. 19, who renders the last words by "déchire-les dans les disputes" concludes: "l'accent portait donc bien sur la joute oratoire, non sur le combat sanglant". This interpretation, however, involves some difficulties from a linguistic point of view. The verb *gadati*, a rhyme word of *vadati* and presumably originally peculiar to colloquial forms of speech, is not attested in Vedic texts before ĀśvŚ. ŚāṅkhŚ. KātŚ. (also in Pāṇini).⁸³ Now it is certainly possible that in lower social strata a new word *vigadā-* for *vivāc-* has been created, since we know from AthS. VII. 12 that debates in the *sabhā* were still practised at that time. On the other hand Thieme was quite right in pointing out that the only word *gada-* that is actually known from Vedic and Avestan means "disease": RS *agadā-* "without disease", AthS. **vigada-* "surrounded by diseases" (later *vigada-* "without disease" Śiś. 19.90); see *JAOS*, 77 (1957), p. 53 n. 1. Hence a determinative *vigadēṣu* "in diverse diseases" might seem "at least possible". It must be objected, however, that in such compounds *vi-* means "trennend", "sich ausdehnend" or "abweichend" (*Altind. Gramm.* II/1, p. 261). Thieme is no doubt right in rejecting the idea of a "joute oratoire" in this stanza, but when he concludes that "All cues point to a battle of Indra, strengthened by the poet's words (c), against the [evil spells of] sorcerers or demons" this is in full harmony with the assumption that *vigadā-* is a synonym of *vivāc-*, which also denotes Indra's fight with demons. Its occurrence as a *hapax legomenon* in the tenth book might be explained from its colloquial character, its absence from the later Vedic literature from the circumstance that this kind of ceremonial word-duels soon went out of use in the post-Rigvedic period.

IV. Vedic *narmā-* and *narīṣṭā-*

The word *narmā-* is only attested in VS. 30.6; 20. The later language from the Mahābhārata downwards uses *narman-* instead. None of the

⁸³ MS. IV. 9.12 (p. 133,10) *jagāda* is a corruption of *jagāra* RS. X. 55.5 (etc.).

etymologies proposed for it carries conviction. Whitney posited a root *nṛ-* "to sport" (*Roots*, p. 92), but its meaning has been deduced from the very words which this root was intended to explain. However, his suggestion that *nṛt-* "to dance" is a root-extension of *nṛ-* was accepted by Persson, Uhlenbeck, Walde-Pokorny, and Wackernagel-Debrunner.⁸⁴ On the other hand, Persson compared the Germanic word *nar* with it,⁸⁵ and in Pokorny's *Idg. vergleich. Wörterbuch*, p. 975, *narmá-* and *nṛtyati* "dances" are derived from a root **sner-* "drehen, winden" (see Uhlenbeck, etc.).

Now this last explanation cannot be correct. The primary meaning of *nṛt-* seems to have been "to manifest one's strength" (cf. *nṛmṇāni ca nṛtāmāno ámartah* V. 33.6) and in corroboration of the assumption of an IE. root **H₂ner-* "vital strength" both Morgenstierne (in a personal communication) and Bailey, *JRAS*, 1953, p. 105 f., pointed to the existence of an Indo-Iranian verbal root *nṛ-*, surviving in Parāci *nar-* "to be able" and perhaps also in Osset. *nārsun* "schwellen, zunehmen, aufgedunsen werden". A derivative from this root is the Rīgvedic verbal noun *nṛtí-*, which seems to denote a manifestation of strength or vitality. In X. 29.2, it is true, it remains doubtful whether the word refers to the victorious reappearance of Uṣas (as a manifestation of her *sū-nṛtā-* "vital strength"),⁸⁶ or rather, on account of the assonance *nṛtaú syāma nṛtamasya nṛṇām*, to Indra's exploit which renders her reappearance possible. But its general meaning is not uncertain in X. 18.3, where the relatives of the dead go back after the burial ceremony to reinforce the vitality of the living: *prāñco agāma nṛtāye hāsāya drāghīya āyuh pratarām dādhanāh* "Wir sind dem Tanz und Lachen entgegen gegangen, unser Leben noch weiter verlängernd" (Geldner). The usual translation "dance" is based on the secondary meaning of *nṛt-*. Now it is possible that the root *nṛ-* has also secondarily expressed the same notion but the context does not provide any clue as to the exact meaning. Reinforcement of the vital strength of the community after the death of one of its members could be accomplished in different ways. Among the Anglo-Saxons, for instance, boastful talk (*gilp*) was one of the most effective means of re-establishing the vitality of the group (V. Grønbech, *Menneskelivet og Guderne*, p. 69).

⁸⁴ See P. Persson, *Studien zur Lehre der Wurzelerweiterung und Wurzelvariation* (1891), p. 63 f., Uhlenbeck, *Kurzgefasstes etym. Wörterb. der altind. Sprache*, p. 144; Walde-Pokorny, *Vergl. Wörterb. der idg. Sprachen*, II, p. 333; Wackernagel-Debrunner, *Altind. Gramm.*, II/2, p. 750.

⁸⁵ See Falk-Torp-Davidsen, *Norwegisch-Dänisches etym. Wörterb.*, p. 1521.

⁸⁶ *Mededelingen der Kon. Nederl. Akad. v. Wetenschappen, Afd. Lett.*, NR. 14/5 (1951), p. 218.

Hence "confirmation of one's vitality" (against the threatening power of Death) is likely to have been the general meaning of *ṛtí-*, which also suits the context of X. 29.2. The word may have had more concrete connotations but the available evidence does not allow us to go beyond this general statement.

Ved. *narmá-*, obviously a derivative from the same root, proves that the meaning "to dance" was not inherent in the root. It also allows us to discard the proposed connection with IE. **sner-* "drehen, winden". It is likely, indeed, that this word refers to *speech*. In the text of the *Puruṣamedha* we read (VS. 30.6, TB. III. 4.1.2) *ṛtāya sūtām, gītāya śailūśām, dhārmāya sabhācarām, nariṣṭhāyai bhīmālām, narmāya rebhām, hāsāya kārim*, etc. It is the *rebhā-*, accordingly, that is particularly associated with *narmá-*. Since the use of *rebhā-* is confined to RS., AthS. (= GB.) and VS. (= TB.) and the word does not survive into the later language (where *Rebhila-*, proper name of a singer and a *sārthavāha*, occurs only in Mṛch. III. 2.5, 3.8, IV. 25.6) it is not surprising that the commentaries did not know it. Mahīdhara explains *śabdakartāraṁ vācātam*, Sāyaṇa has *medhāvinam cāṭuktikuśalam*, and Roth followed them in taking "Schwätzer, Plauderer" (prattler, chatterer) to be the meaning here. It is not obvious, however, that we should here depart from the common meaning "panegyrist" which the word has in the Vedic texts. In RS. I. 113.17 the *rebhā-* is likened to a charioteer and is said to arouse or stimulate the dawns with the reins of his word (*syūmanā vācā úd iyarti vāhni stāvāno rebhā uśāso vibhātīh*. Cf. also I. 127.10, VI. 3.6, VII. 63.3). His name is explained by VII. 76.7 *eṣā netrī rādhasaḥ sūnītānām uśā uchāntī ribhyate vāsiṣṭhaih*.⁸⁷ Since the *rebhā-* as such manifests Indra's *ṛtí-*, the *narmá-* "manifestation of strength" associated with him is likely to refer to his *vāc-* and to denote his "powerful speech".

Not always, however, must the notion of speech have been necessarily implied. In VS. 30.20 *narmāya puṁścalūm*, where the context allows no inference as to the exact meaning, the possibility of a different application cannot be ruled out. On the other hand, the abusive talk between a *puṁścalī-* and a *brahmacārin-* required by the ritual of the Soma sacrifice (cf. Drāhy. XI. 3.9–10 and see Caland's note on ĀpŚ. XXI. 19.5) may have been important enough to justify the association of the *puṁścalū-* with *narmá-* in the sense of "abusive language". Only in the verbal contests, however, could this word, whose original meaning cannot have differed very much from that of *ṛmṇā-*, n. "act of strength, heroic force"

⁸⁷ For *ribh-* "strahlen, glänzen" see Oertel, *Trans. Com. Acad.*, 15, p. 176 n. 1, *Zur Kapiṣṭhala-Kaṭha-Saṁhitā*, p. 62.

have acquired this connotation. A similar, though not identical, semantic development must be assumed for *narman-*, n. "joke" of the later language,^{87a} whose origin must also be sought in the bragging contests of ancient Aryan society, comparable to the *gylpcwide* of the Anglo-Saxons as well as to the *εὐχολαί* of the Homeric heroes. Cf. also Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben*, p. 173. The manifestation and confirmation of one's power and social prestige comprised the ridiculing of one's opponents (p. 253, 258), which accounts for the semantic difference between *narman-* and *nṛmṇā-*, as it does for that between Lat. *iocus* "joke" and Umbr. *iuko-* "prayer".

A confirmation of this explanation is perhaps provided by another derivative of the same root, viz. *narīṣṭā-*, which occurs twice in the AthS. One of these passages, XI. 8.24 *hasó narīṣṭā nṛttāni śārīram ānu prāviśan* (which reminds us of *nṛtāye hāsāya* quoted above) Whitney renders "laughter, sport, dances entered into his body afterwards", while the second passage, VII. 12.2 *vidmā te sabhe nāma, narīṣṭā nāma vā asi*, has been translated "We know thy name, O assembly; 'mirth' verily is thy name" (Bloomfield, *SBE*, 42, p. 138). However the last hymn, which Bloomfield defines as a "Charm to procure influence in the assembly" has very little to do with mirth. The poet invokes the joined aid of *sabhā* and *sāmiti*, the two daughters of Prajāpati, he hopes to speak agreeably and prays that all assembled may utter speech in harmony with him (*tē me santu sāvācasah*, cf. *sajósāh*, RS. IV. 5.1, Renou, *Et. véd.*, II, p. 55), he takes the power (or energy, *vārcas-*) and discernment (*vijñāna-*) from all people present. This again has a close parallel in Old Germanic literature, see Grønbech, *op. c.*, p. 64 f. From the context we may infer that *narīṣṭā-* was a special, perhaps even a secret, name of the *sabhā* as the place where the contest was decided. Perhaps his knowledge of this name secured the contestant the effective assistance of the *sabhā* itself in his contest (which assistance had been invoked in the preceding stanza). In any case, "Geplauder, Scherz", "sport" or "mirth" is not the meaning we should expect in this connection. Nor does Bloomfield's note (*SBE*, 42, p. 544) to the effect that the *sabhā* was also a place for gaming and social intercourse seem an adequate definition of the purpose to which this place was put. The function of gambling in the combat for social prestige has been amply discussed by Held, *The Mahabharata*, p. 243 ff. This function corroborates our impression that the "social intercourse"

^{87a} Already in *narmakāmyā* JB. II. 259, III. 270 "um eines Scherzes willen" (K. Hoffmann, *MüSS*, 10, 1957, p. 64 f.)?

in the *sabhā* had at times rather the character of an embittered combat. The most eloquent witness in this connection is the *sapatnaghnām sūktam*, RS. X. 166, a prayer for divine assistance to overcome the opponent in the word duel (cf. 3 *vācas pate nī sedhemān yāthā mād ādharam vādān*, 4. *ā vaś cittām ā vo vratām ā vo 'hām sāmītiṁ dade*). Bloomfield refers to RS. VI. 28.6 *bṛhād vo vāya ucyate sabhāsu*, but also these words, addressed to the *dakṣiṇā*-cows, may rather mean that the prestige of the *yajamāna* is enhanced when his cows are praised in the *sabhā*. See in general Bloomfield, *The Atharvaveda*, p. 72, where he discusses the Atharvavedic hymns aiming "at success, prominence or superiority in social and political life, favor among men, influence in the assembly, success in debate and subordination to one's will".⁸⁸

What one hopes to obtain in the *sabhā* is power. Indra himself enters the *sabhā* attended by the same *vāyas-* that the *dakṣiṇā*-cows were praised for (RS. VIII. 4.9 *śvātrabhājā vāyasā sacate sādā candró yāti sabhām ūpa*), and the victorious man boasts of his being unassailable like Indra himself (X. 166.2 *ahām asmi sapatnahendra ivāriṣṭo ākṣataḥ | adhāḥ sapātnā me padōr imē sārve abhiṣṭhitāḥ*). It would seem a reasonable conjecture, therefore, that the *sabhā* was conceived as the deity that presided over the contest (AthS. VII. 12.1 *sabhā ca mā sāmītiś cāvatām*) and as such was endowed with, and personified, the *narīṣṭā-* "manifestation of one's social prestige". Whoever knew this (secret?) name of the *sabhā* could be sure that the goddess would grant him victory. Hence, when in AthS. XI. 8.24, along with such positive feelings as "delights, joys, enjoyments" (*ānandā mōdāḥ pramūdo*) also "laughter, *narīṣṭā* and dances" are said to enter the body of man, the word *narīṣṭā-* may here well mean his "manifestation of superiority". Indeed, laughter and dance were not merely expressions of one's high spirits: that they were also *productive* of a new vital strength is not a conjecture based on general ideas about "primitive mentality" but a certain inference to be drawn from RS. X. 18.3 quoted above.

From a morphological point of view *narīṣṭā-* is not clear. It is a formation like *nāviṣṭi-* "praise", *pāniṣṭi-* "admiration", but *narīṣṭā-* cannot be a verbal noun.⁸⁹ In view of Av. *aməratāt-* (with haplology for **amṛta-tāt-*) the question may be raised whether *narīṣṭā-* may stand for

⁸⁸ It should be noted that cows were also the stake of dicing in the *sabhā*, cf. MS. I. 6.11, KS. VIII. 7, KapKS. VII. 7, ĀpSS. V. 19.2.

⁸⁹ See Lindner, *Altind. Nominalbildung*, p. 133; Wackernagel-Debrunner, *Altind. Gramm.*, II/2, pp. 365, 617; Renou, *Monographies sanskrites*, II, p. 11; Burrow, *Skt. Language*, p. 163.

**nariṣṭhā-tā*- “the state of being **nāriṣṭha*-”, the last word then being a derivative from the verbal root like *āviṣṭha*-, *tāpiṣṭha*-, Greek φέριστος etc. (but the ethnic name *Naristī*, Tac. Germ. 42, must be kept apart on account of its aberrant vocalism). For the accent of the supposed older form **nariṣṭhā-tā*- see Wackernagel-Debrunner, *Altind. Gramm.* II/2, p. 619. This explanation could also account for the variant *nariṣṭhā*- in the formula *nariṣṭhāyai bhīmalām* (VS. 30.6, TB. III. 4.1.2).⁹⁰ Both the obvious derivation of the last word from *bhīmā*- and its association with a word for “manifestation of prestige” suggest a meaning “awful, tremendous, formidable” (Mahīdhara: *bhayaṃkaram*), rather than “fearful” (Sāyaṇa *bhīrum*, *capalākṣam*, Roth, Monier-Williams). As for its formation with *-la*-, see *Altind. Gramm.* II/2, p. 863.

Conclusion

“All these feasts bear the character of secret or open warfare, not for property or possessions, but for social influence, prestige; sometimes between individuals, mostly between groups or both simultaneously. The weapon is the gift... Considered in this light these feasts present themselves as purely social phenomena. When, however, we consider that these antagonistic groups, whose peculiar relation also manifests itself in ceremonial matches or even in fights, at the same time stand for certain parts of the cosmos, and that consequently their strife demonstrates the antagonism of primeval cosmic forces, we recognize in these feasts not only the ceremonial sediment of social rivalry, but also a religious rite in the shape of a cosmologic drama.” These words, written by J. P. B. de Josselin de Jong (“De Oorsprong van den goddelijken Bedrieger”, *Meded. Kon. Akad. Wet., Afd. Lett.* 68 B/1, 1929, p. 26f.) with reference to the kolekole-festivals in Melanesia, the kula-system in the Trobriands and the potlatch of N.W. America, would seem to apply fairly well also to the Rigvedic society. The ceremonial contests of poets, who act as the representatives of their patrons (or their parties in general), and whose strife is obviously the counterpart of chariot races and warfare, were at the same time a ritual that aimed at a renewal of life and the winning of the sun. In connection with our conjecture that these ceremonies originally took place during the winter solstice, attention may be drawn to the extinction of the great Bahrām fire in Iran at the

⁹⁰ For a different explanation of the variant *nariṣṭhā*- see Bloomfield, *SBE*, 42, p. 544. The meaning of *nāriṣṭha*- ĀpŚS. II. 20.6 is not clear, see Caland's note *a.l.*

end of the year, during the days consecrated to the Manes, and the renewal of the fire at the New Year's festival (which is still celebrated on the 17th of January by the Kafirs of the Hindu Kush, Tavadia, *ARW.*, 36, 1939, pp. 257, 275). On Indian soil *this* festival and the verbal contests connected with it must soon have fallen into desuetude, and the later potlatch ritual, with gambling as its most prominent manifestation, came to be celebrated in the rainy season according to Held, *The Mahabharata*, p. 293. On the other hand, the difficulties inherent in any attempt to reconstruct the social phenomena of the ancient Indo-Iranian civilization are apparent from this study. Verbal contests could occur in principle on any occasion where the *nā vyāxanō* or *sabhéyo yúvā* appeared as a speaker in a meeting. Now, it may certainly be true that, just as in the Dyak society (see p. 253), also with the ancient Aryans any verbal contest could have an importance of its own which transcended the private interests of the persons concerned, but the evidence hardly admits of a demonstration of such speculations. In any case, the Rigveda presents a picture of highly specialized functions. The patron apparently does not act as a *sabhéyo yúvā* during the great annual festival but, while impersonating Indra as *maghāvā* by his munificence, he obliges the poets by his gifts to assist him in return by defending his party in the word duels in the *sabhā*. That in such duels, where the contestants had to rely on the "mental quickness in their heart" (X.71.8), elaborate hymns could have been of much importance for the ultimate decision is hardly probable. It is possible that, owing to the specialization which reserved this task for the priestly poets, these duels had already assumed the character of the purely priestly *brahmodyas*. However that may be, in any case the Rigveda, despite its vague terminology, would seem to point to the existence of a second function of the poets besides that of composing and reciting the sacrificial hymns, even though it is impossible for us in most cases clearly to distinguish between both. This much seems clear, anyway, that the main tasks reserved for the patron were the chariot races and the present-giving, which both were also weapons in the competition of this potlatch-like festival (cf. e.g. Held, *op. cit.*, p. 245).

References to analogous phenomena in the civilization of other "Indo-European" peoples have purposely been omitted in the preceding study. In passing mention may be made of some interesting parallels (to which Prof. J. W. de Jong drew my attention) to be found in the New Year's festival in Lhasa, which, though amalgamated with the Mönlom-ceremony since the reorganization by the fifth Dalai Lama, still preserves

some characteristic traits of the archaic popular festival, including horse races between two parties. See esp. Ernst Schäfer, *Fest der weissen Schleier* (3rd ed., 1952), pp. 181-183, and further Ekai Kawaguchi, *Three Years in Tibet* (1909), p. 531 ff., L. Petech, *Il nuovo Ramusio II, I Missionari Italiani nel Tibet e nel Nepal*, vol. IV (1953), p. 262f. (with references).

8. AN INDIAN PROMETHEUS ?

1. The idea that Vedic mythology had a counterpart to the Greek myth of the Titan Prometheus, who stole the fire from Zeus for the benefit of men, is still current among Vedic scholars. It dates back to 1852, when Rudolph Roth in *Jāśka's Nirukta sammt den Nighaṇṭavas*, p. 112, discussed Yāśka's interpretation of Mātariśvan in the following words: 'Die Deutung von Mātariṣvan auf Vāju lässt sich aus den Texten nicht rechtfertigen und beruht wohl nur auf der Etymologie von W. ṣvan. Die zahlreichen Erwähnungen im Veda zeigen das Wort in zwei Deutungen. Einmal bezeichnet es Agni selbst ... sodann aber auch denjenigen, der ein anderer Prometheus das von der Erde verschwundene Feuer vom Himmel, von den Göttern herabholt und zu den Menschen, zu den Bhṛgu bringt ... Wie Prometheus der übermenschlichen Ordnung der Titanen angehört und nur darum den Funken im Himmel holen konnte, so ist Mātariṣvan zu jenen halbgöttlichen Geschlechtern zu rechnen, welche die vedische Sage bald in Gemeinschaft der Götter, bald auf Erden wohnen lässt ... Von diesen zwei Bedeutungen des Wortes Mātariṣvan scheint mir die erste, wonach es das Feuer selbst bezeichnet, die ursprüngliche zu sein.' Whatever the value may be of the etymological explanation 'in der Mutter schwellend', on which his last conclusion is based, it should in any case be noted that Roth himself seems to have been well aware of the weak foundation on which his interpretation of the myth rested. To the words 'von den Göttern herabgeholt' he added a special foot-note in which he referred to RS. III. 9.5 and III. 5. 10 as the 'Hauptstellen'.

Seven years later a book was published which was to become one of the classics in the field of comparative mythology,¹ viz. *Die Herabkunft*

1. Cf. 'A. Kuhn's epoch-making essay' (Eggeling, *SBE*. XII, p. 294 n. 3). This is still true

des Feuers und des Göttertrankes (Berlin 1859) by Adalbert Kuhn. In the beginning of the first part (pp. 1–118) Kuhn rather perfunctorily dealt with 'die herabführung des Agni zu den menschen', for which he simply referred to Roth's 'ample discussion' (p. 5). He accepted without further comment Roth's equation of Mātariśvan and Prometheus, whose name he explained from Skt. *pramātha*- 'theft' and *pramantha*- 'twirler' (pp. 16–18, earlier in KZ. 4, p. 124). On p. 18 he concludes: 'Nach diesen vergleichungen bedarf es denn wohl kaum noch der ausdrücklichen erklärung, dass wir in dem feuerraub des Prometheus einen mythos anzuerkennen haben, der sich dem von Mātariśvan klar zur seite stellt, wie ich denn auch bereits oben angegeben habe, dass auch Roth in diesem einen zweiten Prometheus sehe. Dass er aber mit ihm identisch sei, hoffe ich in der vorangehenden ausführung über seinen namen klar gemacht zu haben ...' The second part of his book (pp. 118–253) was devoted to 'Die herabholung des göttertranks'.

Kuhn was unquestionably right in treating the winning of Agni and Soma as two parallel myths. In various ways the Vedic myths express the idea that in the beginning Agni and Soma were in a world whose power of resistance (*vṛtrá-*) was impersonated by a dragon (*áhi-*). The following reflexions on the Vedic myth are based upon the assumption that this world was an undifferentiated primeval unity, comparable to the Greek Chaos.²

Some myths imply that Agni and Soma were released from this primordial world even before Indra slew Vṛtra. In the Rígveda this is expressed in I. 93. 6: 'One (of you) Mātariśvan fetched from heaven, the other the eagle has stolen from the rock' *ányaṃ divó mātariśvā jābhārā, 'mathnād anyám pári śyenó ádreḥ*).³ On the other hand it is said

in spite of all justified criticism of later generations, e.g., Vodsikov, *Sjæledyrkelse og Naturdyrkelse* I (1890–1897), p. 127.

2. See further, e.g., *IIJ.* IV (1960), p. 219, 270, VIII (1964), p. 107.

3. See Johanna Narten, *IIJ.* IV (1960), p. 123. Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, p. 221, denies that this connection of Agni and Soma was 'primitive'.

in one of the Saṃhitās that when Indra was about to slay the dragon, Agni and Soma warned him not to do so because they were in Vṛtra's womb. Cf. TS. II. 5. 2. 2–3 *mā prá hār, āvám antāḥ sva íti* and RS. III. 29. 14, where Agni is said to have been born from the womb of the Asura (*yád ásurasya jāṭhárād ájāyata*). The mythological implication of this version of the Vedic Creation myth is, accordingly, that Agni and Soma had to be liberated from the primordial world before Indra could slay the dragon to found the dualistic cosmos. Many Vedic texts state, indeed, that Indra conquered Vṛtra with the help of Agni and Soma, cf. MS. II. 1. 3 (p. 5, 1) *agníśómābhyām vái víryeṇé 'ndro vṛtrám ahan* and KS. XXIV. 7 (p. 97, 18), KKS. XXXVII. 8 (p. 202, 20), TS. I. 6. 11. 6 = VI. 1. 11. 6 (and Keith's translation, p. 500 with n. 4), ŚB. II. 4. 4. 15, V. 2. 3. 7, AB. II. 3. 12.

In one of the most interesting cosmogonical hymns it is said that Agni, Soma and Varuṇa left the world of the ancient Father Asura, who here represents the primeval world of undifferentiated unity (RS. X. 124. 4, cf. verse 2). Then Indra⁴ invited Soma to come outside so that they could conjointly slay Vṛtra (verse 6: *hánāva vṛtrám, niréhi soma*), a procedure which is strongly reminiscent of the Roman *evocatio deorum ex urbibus obsessis* (as Macrobius has it). A mythological parallel is the story of how Indra had to persuade Uśanā Kāvyaḥ to come over from the Asuras to the party of the Devas before the latter could conquer their foes: Jaim. Br. I. 126⁸ *asmān abhyupāvartasve 'ti*, Baudh. ŚS. XVIII. 46 (p. 403, 3 f.) *sa hā 'jñāpto 'surebhyo 'dhi devān upasamiyāya. tato ha vā etad devā asurān mahāsaṃgrāmaṃ jigyuḥ*. It is clear that God Soma, who strengthens Indra before the combat with Vṛtra, can be said to have assisted him. Cf. the Soma-hymn IX. 61. 22 *sá pavasva yá ávithé 'ndraṃ vṛtrāya hántave*. The notion of *Sóma-vṛtrahán-* was, indeed, an inheritance from the Proto-Aryan religion, cf. *Haoma-vərəθrajan-* Y. 9. 16, Yt. 14. 57.

These few details may be sufficient to show how problematical Roth's and Kuhn's equation of Mātariśvan and Prometheus was.

4. Vodskov, *Sjæledyrkelse og Naturdyrkelse*, p. 212, took Agni to be the one who bade Soma to appear.

Kuhn's interpretation basically rested on two assumptions, first, that Agni and Soma originally were in heaven ('in den Wolken entstehend', p. 253) and, second, that the fire was stolen *from the gods* for the benefit of men. It should be noted that when Kuhn wrote (p. 6) 'es heisst nämlich..., dass Mâtariçvan den Agni von den *göttern* hergebracht habe' he omitted the cautious proviso made by Roth. It will be clear that from a mythological point of view the correctness of these words is open to serious doubts. In the Vedic Śyena-myth the eagle (or whatever other bird may have been denoted by the word) steals Soma *for Indra*, the protagonist of the Devas, to give him the force necessary for slaying the dragon. This is not the place to discuss from what world Soma was stolen. The Rigveda specifies it as 'from afar' (*parāvataḥ*), 'from the rock', 'from the iron strongholds', 'from the *sānu*' (either of heaven or of a mountain), 'from the sky', whereas the brāhmaṇas simply refer in fixed phrases to 'yonder world', 'the third heaven' or simply 'the heaven' (only ŚB.). Whatever the explanation of these terms may be (which I hope to discuss elsewhere), they do not contain the slightest indication that Soma was stolen from the gods. On the contrary, it is sometimes expressly said that the gods tried to win Soma from yonder world (AB., ŚB., see below, p. 95). Not until the Suparṇākhyāna and the Mahābhārata was the fundamental character of this myth so much forgotten that the Soma could be said to have been stolen from Indra. It goes without saying that any attempt to interpret the meaning of the Śyena-myth on the basis of the distorted data of the Suparṇākhyāna (e.g., Jarl Charpentier, *Die Suparṇasage*, 1920, pp. 149, 287, J. von Negelein, *GGA.* 1924, pp. 66f., 117!) is doomed to failure.

2. In view of what was said above about the older version of the Śyena-myth, a brief discussion of a single exception found in a brāhmaṇa must here be inserted. In the Yajurvedic texts the Śyena-myth is presented in a more or less ritualized way. Here it is the three metres which fly up to the sky, the third of which, viz. the Gāyatrī (sometimes in the shape of an eagle), steals Soma from one or more Soma-guar-

dians. The resistance offered by these guardians is no doubt an old feature of the myth. These guardians, although sometimes confused with the Gandharvas, were doubtless serpents.⁵ As such, they are characteristic of the parallelism that exists in many points between the primeval world which was undivided and the nether world of the later dualistic cosmos.

Now, while the Taittirīya Saṃhitā refers to these guardians in a rather neutral way, in the words (TS. VI.1.10.5) *etē vā amúṣmiṃ lokaś sómam arakṣan, tébhyó 'dhi sómam āharan* 'they indeed in yonder world guarded the Soma; from them they grasped⁶ the Soma' (Keith), the Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā confuses them with the Gandharvas, who properly belong to a different episode of the myth. Cf. KS. XXIV. 6 (p. 96,6) *ete vā etad* (read *etaṃ*?) *gandharvā agopāyann amuṣmiṃ loka*. The parallel passage in the Kapiṣṭhala-Kāṭha Saṃhitā has a curious but unmistakable slip in that it here replaces *gandharvā* by *devā*: KKS. XXXVII.7 (p. 201, 10) *ete vā etaṃ devā agopāyann amuṣmiṃ loka*. The scribe who here inadvertently wrote *devā* but left the reference to the *gandharvāḥ* in line 13 intact, may have had in mind a passage like *Suparṇākhyāna* 12.2, where it is the *devāḥ* that watch over the Soma.

While this is obviously a mere slip, the same cannot be said of two passages in the Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā: MS. III.7.7 (p. 84, 16f.), 8.10 (p. 109, 10) reads *etē vai devānāṃ somarākṣaya: etébhyo vā ādhi chāndāṃsi sómam āharan*. The internal contradiction between the demoniacal beings from whom the Soma is stolen and the notion of 'guardians of the gods' is obvious. There must accordingly have been a shift in the idea associated with the 'guardians', and this shift was probably due to the ritual act of 'indicating' the objects that served as the price of Soma to these Soma-guardians. The ritual of the buying of the Soma (*somakráyaṇam*) was, indeed, considered a re-enactment of the mythi-

5. Similarly K. F. Johansson, *Solfageln i Indien* (1910), p. 65 and J. Charpentier, *Die Suparṇasage* (1920), pp. 138, 148.

6. Read: brought.

cal theft of the Soma from the serpents who were its guardians. Therefore, the guardians might again feel offended by this ritual and to ward off their evil influence they had to be appeased by objects called *somakráyaṇāḥ*, cf. KS. XXIV.6 (p.96,5) *svānnabhrāḍ iti somakrayaṇān anudiśati*. Now the original meaning of this act of 'indicating' the *somakráyaṇāḥ* had come to be reinterpreted in the course of time. The Taittirīya Saṃhitā explains the rite as follows (TS.VI.1.10.5): *yád etébhyaḥ somakráyaṇān ná 'nudiśéd, ákrīto 'sya sómaḥ syān, ná 'syai 'tē 'múṣmiṃ loké sómaṃ rakṣeyur; yád etébhyaḥ somakráyaṇān anudiśati krīto 'sya sómo bhavaty, etē 'syā 'múṣmiṃ loké sómaṃ rakṣanti* 'If he were not to indicate to them those that serve as the price of Soma, he would not have purchased the Soma, and they would not guard the Soma for him in yonder world. In that he indicates to them those that serve as the price of Soma, he really purchases the Soma, and they guard the Soma for him in yonder world' (Keith). Owing to the reinterpretation of the function of the Soma-guardians that is expressed in these additional remarks the author of the passage in the Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā could take a further step and declare them to be guardians who guarded Soma 'in yonder world' for later use *by the gods*. It is evident, however, that his phrase *devānāṃ somarākṣayaḥ*, isolated as it is in Vedic literature, does not prove that the Soma was originally stolen from the gods. Nor can such a conclusion be based upon Jaim.Br. I.287 *atha he 'ndrasya tridive Soma āsa* 'Now Soma was in the third heaven of Indra', which merely foreshadows the later notions of the Suparṇākhyāna and the epic. Cf. also Mhbh. V.97.4 crit. ed. *atrā 'mṛtaṃ suraiḥ pītṛvā nihitaṃ nihataṛibhiḥ* (viz. in the *nāgaloka*, which is an old trait!).

An equally curious shift in the Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa (III. 6.2.8 and 15) is not relevant for the Śyena-myth.

3. Since, then, Soma was stolen for Indra and the Devas and the same must be assumed to hold good for Agni, the contrast with the Greek myth of Prometheus is obvious. Because Prometheus had deceived Zeus (Hesiod, *Theogonia* 537-545, *Erga* 47-48), the latter hid the

fire and withheld it from men. Prometheus, however, managed to steal it from him. See *Theagonia* 565–567 and especially *Erga* 50–53:

(Ζεύς) κρύψε δὲ πῦρ · τὸ μὲν αὖτις ἐὺς παῖς Ἰαπετοῖο
ἔκλεψ' ἀνθρώποισι Διὸς παρὰ μητιόεντος
ἐν κοίλῳ νάρθηγι λαθὼν Δία τερπικέραυνον

It is curious that this fundamental contrast between this myth and that of Mātariśvan has not withheld the large majority of scholars, up to the present day, to accept Roth's interpretation of Mātariśvan as a second Prometheus. Only Bergaigne, in accordance with his structural, non-comparative approach, does not mention Prometheus by name but he, too, accepts Roth's interpretation. Cf. *La religion védique* I (1878), p. 54: 'Mais au vers III, 9, 5, il est dit en propres termes que le feu caché, et produit par la friction, a été tiré par Mātariśvan 'd'un lieu éloigné', tiré 'des dieux.' Cf. pp. 17, 52, 55 on the descent of the fire. Of the other authors the following may be quoted in the order of appearance of the first editions of their works. H.S. Vodskov, *Sjæledyrkelse og Naturdyrkelse* (1890–1897), p. 124: 'baade Manu og alle de andre kunde hentet den fra Himlen som Prometheus gjorde det'. Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie* (1891–1902), I² (1927), p. 155: 'Die Verse, welche von M[ātariśvan] als Prometheus Indiens sprechen, sind zwar zahlreich genug, um ihn als Feuerbringer zu kennzeichnen, aber den natürlichen Ausgangspunkt seines Wesens hellen sie nicht auf' (cf. n. 5, without comment on III. 9. 5, and II² (1929), p. 352). H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda* (1894), 3rd and 4th ed. (1923), p. 122: 'sein Bote bringt ihm und damit der Menschheit vom Himmel das Feuer, dessen vornehmste Tugend für den vedischen Dichter seine Wirksamkeit beim Opfer ist. Dies die indisch dürftige Form der Vorstellungen, die der Tiefsinn griechischen Geistes zur weltumfassenden Tragik des Prometheusmythus erhoben hat.' Cf. p. 108 n. 3. A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology* (1897), p. 72: 'Mātariśvan would thus appear to be a personification of a celestial form of Agni, who at the same time

is thought of as having like Prometheus brought down the hidden fire from heaven to earth.' E.W. Hopkins, *The Religions of India* (1902), p. 109f.: 'Aryan, as Kuhn has shown, is at least the conception if not the particular form of the legend alluded to in this hymn, of fire brought from the sky to earth, which Promethean act is attributed elsewhere to the fire-priest.' Cf. p. 168: 'no detailed myth was current in primitive times'. Jarl Charpentier, *Kleine Beiträge zur indoiranischen Mythologie* (Uppsala Universitets Arsskrift 1911), pp. 73, 74 (no comment on III. 9.5), pp. 76-77 ('dass Mātariśvan in den älteren Teilen des RV. wirklich eine Art Prometheus, ein halb-göttliches Wesen ist, das das Feuer vom Himmel bringt oder hier auf der Erde erzeugt hat'), p. 81 ('der indische Prometheus'), p. 83. A.B. Keith, *JRAS.* 1916, p. 555: 'It is clear, however, that the Vedic myth already regards the action of the descent of fire in the form of lightning and the fall of rain therewith as a species of theft, and the development of a myth like that of Prometheus is not very difficult.' Leopold von Schroeder, *Arische Religion* (1916/1923), II, p. 485: 'Häufiger wird die wunderbare Tat dem Mātariṣvan zugeschrieben, einem indischen Prometheus ...' H.D. Griswold, *The Religion of the Ṛigveda* (1923), p. 163: 'We have here in general the Vedic equivalent of the Greek myth of Prometheus.' A.B. Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda* (1925), p. 138: 'he brings Agni from the sky, from afar for men, or from the gods' ... 'The only alternative view which has any plausibility is that of Oldenberg who sees in him a Prometheus only, without any divine nature other than the bringing down of fire.' P. 162 n. 1 'The legend of the theft of fire (Prometheus, Loki) is only faintly seen in the figure of Mātariṣvan.' Johanna Narten, *IJ.* IV (1960), p. 134: 'Daß in Mātariśvan der indische Prometheus vorliegt, wurde auch bisher nicht bezweifelt ... Doch wurde in der indischen Version das Raubmotiv des griechischen Mythos vermißt ... Die Feststellung der Wurzel *math-* "entreißen, rauben" und ihres Vorkommens in Verbindung mit Mātariśvan innerhalb des ältesten indischen Literaturwerks zeigt, daß

der Mātariśvan-Prometheus-Mythos ursprünglich also auch in diesem Punkt übereinstimmte – in Indien ging dieser Zug allerdings nach-vedisch verloren.’

4. Just as in the case of Soma, the place from which Agni is brought to men is described in the Rigveda in various terms. He is said to have been brought ‘from heaven’, ‘from afar’, from ‘the womb of the waters’ or to have freed himself ‘from darkness’.⁷ Owing to the strict parallelism between the mythical origin of Agni and the ritual act of kindling the fire, references to the first often intermingle in these verses with those to the latter. Cf., e.g., VI.8.4 *apām upásthē mahiṣā agrbhñata, viśo rājānam ūpa tasthur ṛgmīyam / ā dūtó agnīm abharad vivásvato, vaiśvānarām mātariśvā parāvataḥ* ‘In the womb of the waters the buffaloes took hold of him, the clans worshipped the king who is to be praised. The messenger of Vivasvant, Mātariśvan, brought Agni Vaiśvānara hither from afar’, V.1.2 *mahān devás támaso nír amoci* ‘The great god freed himself from darkness’, VI.15.17 *imám u tyám atharvavád agnīm manthanti vedhásah / yám anūkūyántam ānayann āmūraṃ śyāvyābhyah* ‘This Agni the arrangers (of the ritual) produce by whirling as (did) Atharvan, him, the unerring one, who moves tortuously, whom they have brought from the dark (places).’

As for the term *parāvát-*, it has long been observed that it often denotes the underworld, e.g. I.48.7 (*Uṣas*) *eṣā ’yukta parāvataḥ sūryasyo ’dāyanād ādhi* ‘she just now harnessed (her horses) from afar, from the point where the sun rises’, IV.21.3 *ā yātv índro divá ā pṛthivyā makṣū samudrād utá vā pūriṣāt/śvāṇarād āvase no marútvān parāvato vā sádanād ṛtasya* ‘Indra should soon come from heaven, from the earth, from the sea or from the firm ground, from Svarṇara, accompanied by the Maruts, to assist us, or from afar, from the seat of *Ṛta*’. Cf. also Renou, *IIJ*.4 (1960), p. 109. The last words *parāvato vā sádanād ṛtasya*, which Geldner took to mean ‘den höchsten Himmel’ must rather refer

7. Cf. also X.45.6 *vīlūm cid ādrim abhinat parāyān jānā yád agnīm áyajanta pāṇca* ‘Er spaltete sogar den festen Fels in die Ferne ziehend, als die fünf Völker den Agni anbeteten’ (Geldner).

to the nether world, for the sun rises in the morning 'from the seat of Ṛta' (*ṛtasya śadanāt* I.164.47) and Uṣas, who comes 'from afar' (*parāvataḥ* I.92.3) awakens 'from the śadas of Ṛta' (IV. 51.8). See further V.62.1 and in general *IJ.* IV (1960), p. 226, VIII (1964), p. 107 and cf. the references to the 'stone house' or 'rock' where Agni is born and from which he rises in the morning (*IJ.* VIII., pp. 111 n. 81, 108, 120 n. 122). As such *parāvát-* is used as an euphemistic term for *Nirṛti-* 'destruction', as Renou, *Ind. Ling.* 16 (1955), p. 124 n. 4 has pointed out.

It remains one of the unsolved problems of Vedic mythology why terms for 'nether world' and 'primeval world' can alternate with 'heaven', 'the highest heaven', 'the third heaven'. Possibly these terms primarily denoted the mysterious world of the totality of the dualistic cosmos, Viṣṇu's third step, and were then also used in application to the undivided primeval world. Be that as it may, this much is obvious that the *parāvát-*, which could be identified with *Nirṛti-*, was not a dwelling-place of the Devas.

The same equivalence of the distant region (*parāvát-*) and heaven is found in the myth of Mātariśvan. On the one hand Mātariśvan is said to have brought Agni for Manu from afar: I.128.2 *yám mātariśvā mánave parāváto, devám bhāḥ parāvataḥ*, while on the other hand Mātariśvan brought Agni from heaven (*divó*), in contrast with Soma who is said to have come from the rock (I.93.6, see above p.86).

5. In the Rigveda there is only one version of the myth of the carrying off of Soma. When Indra was about to slay Vṛtra – at a moment, accordingly, when heaven and earth were not yet separated and the world was still the *rudis indigestaque moles*, the *ásat*, from which the cosmos was to arise – the eagle brought the Soma *for him* (and for Manu, IV.26.4). Since, however, Indra stood for the Devas in general, it could also be said that the Devas, in their strife with the Asuras, longed for the beverage of immortality. This version is found in the Yajurveda, side by side with the well-known myth of Kadrá and

Suparñī. Cf., e.g., MS. III.7.8 (p. 85, 13), 8.10 (p. 109, 10) *sómo vai amútrā 'sīt, té devā gāyatrīm prāhiṇvann: amūṃ sómam āharé 'ti* 'Soma was yonder. The Devas sent Gāyatrī, saying "fetch yonder Soma".' Similarly Ait.Br.III.25.1 and 26.1-3.

According to this version Soma was brought *for the gods*, cf. ŚBK. II.6.3.1 *devébhyas tásyā āhárantyā avād ástā 'bhyāyátya parṇám prāciccheda* (quoted from Eggeling, SBE. XII, p. 183 n. 2) 'while she was bringing him *for the gods*, a (footless) archer aimed at her and severed one of the feathers', ŚBM. III.2.4.2 *tébhyo gāyatrī sómam áchā 'patat* 'Gāyatrī flew up to Soma *for them*', III.6.2.8 *sā ha kadrūr uvāca / ātmānam vai tvā 'jaiṣaṃ, divy āsau sōmas, tām devébhya āhara ...* 'Then said Kadrū 'Verily I have won thine own self; yonder is Soma in the heaven: fetch him hither *for the gods ...*' (Egg.), AB. III.26.1 *te devā abruvan gāyatrīm: tvaṃ na imaṃ somaṃ rājānam āhare 'ti* 'The gods said to Gāyatrī "Do thou bring king Soma *for us*"'. The Kāṭhaka formulates this in a more general way, cf. KS. XXVI.2 (p. 123, 2-3), KKS. XL.5 (p. 229, 2-3): *sarvebhyo vā eṣa āhriyate manuṣyebhyaḥ pitṛbhyo devebhyas ...* 'Verily, it is for all that this (Soma) is brought: for men, for the pitaras, *for the gods.*'

Since the myth of Mātariśvan runs entirely parallel to the Śyena-myth, it would be quite in line with the general mythological context if Mātariśvan brought Agni from the same primeval world not only 'for Manu' (*mánave* I.128.2) but also '*for the gods*' (*devébhyaḥ*). It should be noted in this connection that nowhere in the Rigveda is Mātariśvan said to be an enemy of the gods. He rather *cooperates* with them to fetch the fire for men, cf. X.46.9cd *īlénym prathamám mātariśvā devās tataḥsur mánave yājatram* 'Thee, O Agni, who must be invoked first, thee, who deservest adoration, Mātariśvan and the gods have shaped for Manu.'

The preceding conclusion, based upon a purely mythological interpretation of the data, that Mātariśvan must have brought the fire *for the gods*, is in flat contradiction with the view, universally held ever since

1852, that he has stolen it *from the gods*. Now, it seems never to have been sufficiently realized (although Roth had implicitly warned his readers!) that the whole theory of an Indian Prometheus is based *exclusively*⁸ upon Roth's interpretation of the form *devébhyaḥ* as an ablative in III.9.5:

*sasṛvāṃsam iva tmānā
'gnīm itthā tiróhitam/
áinaṃ nayan mātariśvā parāvāto
devébhyo mathitám pári*

which Geldner translates as follows: 'Der gleichsam von selbst weg-gelaufen war, den Agni, der dort verborgen war, den führte Mātariśvan aus der Ferne her, von den Göttern weg, nachdem er (aus dem Holze) gerieben war'. Roth inferred from this passage that Mātariśvan 'das von der Erde verschwundene Feuer, vom Himmel, von den Göttern her-abholt' and Kuhn (p. 6) 'dass Mātariśvan den Agni von den göttern hergebracht habe' (see p. 88). Similarly Oldenberg, *Religion des Veda*³⁻⁴, p. 122: 'von den Göttern her'. All translators have followed Roth in this respect. Cf.

1876: Ludwig I, p. 336 'ihn fürte Mātariśvan aus der ferne, den durch reiben erzeugten, von den göttern her'; Grassmann I, p. 64 'Ihn führte von den Göttern Mātariśvan her, von Ferne den errienenen'.

1897: Oldenberg, *SBE*. 46, p. 256 'Him Mātariśvan brought hither from afar, from the gods, when he had been produced by attrition (of

8. As for the Bhṛgu, mentioned in Roth's second 'Hauptstelle' (see above, p. 85), viz. III. 5. 10 *yádī bhṛ'gubhyaḥ pári mātariśvā gúhā śántaṃ havyavā'haṃ samīdhé* 'wenn Mātariśvan ihn, der sich vor den Bhṛgu's verborgen hielt, als den Opferfahrer entzündet hat' (Geldner), it is not quite clear how Roth interpreted this passage but his general statement 'Da er [viz. Mātariśvan] das Feuer zu den Bhṛgu bringt' and 'der ... das Feuer ... zu den Menschen, zu den Bhṛgu bringt' agrees with most modern translations of this particular passage, e. g., Oldenberg, *SBE*. 46, p. 241 'for the sake of the Bhṛgu', Renou, *EVP*. XII, p. 55 'pour les Bhṛgu'. See also Johanna Narten, *IJ*. IV, p. 133 f. Anyway, it cannot be used in support of the theory of an Indian Prometheus, in spite of Kuhn, p. 6 ('von den Bhṛgu her'). [See now also Hanns-Peter Schmidt, *Bṛhaspati und Indra* (1968), p. 69.]

the wood'); Macdonell, *Ved. Myth.*, p. 71 paraphrases 'Mātariśvan brought from afar the hidden Agni, produced by friction, from the gods'.

1951: Geldner I, p. 347 (see above)

1960: Johanna Narten, *IJ.* IV (1960), p. 133, who established the correct meaning of *math-*: 'den führte Mātariśvan aus der Ferne her, den von den Göttern weg geraubten'.

1964: Renou, *EVP.* XII, p. 57: 'C'est Mātariśvan qui l'amena du fond de l'espace, de chez les dieux, (cet Agni par lui) dérobé' (p. 118: équivoque entre 'baratté' et 'dérobé').

As for the formal interpretation of the verse, it should be noted that *mathāyāti* 'he steals' is sometimes construed with the adverb *pāri* 'from', which takes various positions with regard to the ablative. It can stand after it (cf. IX.77.2 *yām divás pāri śyenó mathāyāt* 'whom the eagle stole from heaven') or independently, as in I.93.6 *ámathnād anyām pāri śyenó ádreḥ* 'the other the eagle stole from the rock'. Nothing prevents us, therefore, from construing *mathitám pāri* with *parāvato* (cf. I.128.2 *devám bhāḥ parāvataḥ*, p. 94 and VI. 8. 4, p. 93).

Now, it was assumed above that just as Soma had to be stolen *before* Indra's *vṛtrahátya-*, so Mātariśvan's theft of the fire took place in the undifferentiated 'primeval world. If this is correct, the myth of Mātariśvan may be compared with Agni's leaving the 'Father Asura' at the moment of the creation of the dualistic cosmos. In RS. X. 124.2 Agni goes stealthily away (*gúhā yán ... emi*) and in verse 4 he, Soma and Varuṇa choose Indra and leave the 'Father': *índram vṛṇānāḥ pitáram jahāmi / agníḥ sómo váruṇas té cyavante*.

In quite the same way it is said in I. 141.3-4 that Mātariśvan steals Agni, who is hidden (*gúhā sántam*), and that Agni is led away from the Father. This father, who can hardly be any one else but the *pitṛ-Asura-* of X. 124.3, is here denoted as *mádhva ādhaváh*, which Johanna Narten, *IJ.* IV, p. 133 interprets as 'Herschüttler des Süßtranks'. Cf., however, Renou, *EVP.* 12, p. 102. The relevant lines are the following:

- (3cd) *yád īm ánu pradívo mádhva ādhavé*
gúhā sántam mātariśvā mathāyāti
 (4a) *prá yát pitúḥ paramān nīyāte pári*

‘when Mātariśvan steals him who for a long time past has been hidden with the one who stirs the sweet drink’. (4) ‘When he is carried away from the highest Father ...’

This Father, who as an Asura apparently stands for the primeval world, cannot possibly be localized in the world of the Devas. For that reason the correct translation of III.9.5cd can only be: ‘Mātariśvan brought him, who had been stolen from afar, *for the gods*.’ This correct syntactical interpretation of a single word disposes of the ‘Indian Prometheus’.⁹

9. For typographical reasons the distinction between *ardhacandra* and *ṁ* had to be ignored, while for editorial reasons *ṁ* has been substituted for *m* of the manuscript.

9. THE WORSHIP OF THE JARJARA ON THE STAGE

1. It would have been impossible for us to form an adequate idea of the fundamental importance of the *pūrvaraṅga* of the ancient Sanskrit drama as a religious *drōmenon*, if we had not had the good luck of the *Bhāratīya Nāṭyaśāstra* having been handed down to us.¹ This work describes in great detail the ritual which preceded the actual dramatic performance and which was apparently intended to consecrate the stage. In the context of this study, which deals with one particular part of that ritual only, no attempt can be made to substantiate this general statement, which involves that such translations as "preliminaries"² or "Vorspiel"³ fail to do full justice to the original character of the *pūrvaraṅga*.

In any case, although late theoreticians of about the fourteenth century

¹ References to the *Nāṭyaśāstra* are to chapters and verses of the Calcutta edition (siglum C only added where necessary) by Manomohan Ghosh, *The Nāṭyaśāstra ascribed to Bharata-Muni*, vol. I (chapters I-XXVII) [2nd ed.] Calcutta, 1967, vol. II (books XXVIII-XXXVI), (bibl. Indica no 272A) Calcutta, 1956. Sometimes better readings are given. Where necessary, variant readings are quoted from the edition of Baroda (siglum B), of which only the first volume (chapters I-VII) was accessible to me in the revised 2nd ed.: *Nāṭyaśāstra of Bharatamuni* with the commentary *Abhinavabhāratī* by Abhinavaguptācārya, ed. by M. Ramakrishna Kavi, revised and crit. ed. by K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, Śiromaṇi (Baroda, 1956). For the chapters XIX-XXVII, vol. III of the 1st ed. (*Gaekwad's Oriental Series*, No CXXIV) Baroda, 1954, was at my disposal. The *Kāvyamālā*-edition [KM] is quoted in the 2nd ed. by Pandit Kedārṇāth (*Kāvyamālā* No. 42, Bombay, 1943). The Sanskrit text of Raghuvamśa's edition (vol. I, chapters I-VII, Delhi-Vārāṇasī-Paṭṇā 1964) is worthless for critical purposes.

² E.g., Manomohan Ghosh, *The Nāṭyaśāstra* (Translation), Vol. I, revised second ed. (Calcutta, 1967), p. 76 and passim; A. B. Keith, *The Sanskrit Drama* (Oxford, 1924), p. 292: "the preliminary scene or *Pūrvaraṅga*, which is practically non-existent in the classical drama."

³ See P. Thieme, "Das Indische Theater" (in Kindermann, *Fernöstliches Theater*, Stuttgart, 1966), pp. 37, 53 and p. 39: "Vorspiel" being the first introduction as against *prastāvanā*, the second introduction; H.-O. Feistel, *Das Vorspiel auf dem Theater* (dissertation Tübingen, 1969).

A.D.⁴ simply reckon the *pūrvaraṅga* among the four preliminaries of a play,⁵ people were even at that time still aware of its religious function.⁶ The *Nāṭyaśāstra* itself refers to it, in one recension, as a secret act,⁷ which aims at worshipping the gods.⁸ Konow is right in saying that the *pūrvaraṅga* is entirely distinct from the drama proper.⁹ Roughly speaking it may be said that, to a certain extent at least, the *pūrvaraṅga* is a double of the consecration which took place after the building of a new playhouse and the rites of which are described in the third chapter. From its character as a consecration of the stage (*raṅgapūjana*) it may be inferred that the drama itself must originally have had a sacred character. In point of fact, the *pūrvaraṅga* was a sacred act which, as the *Nāṭyaśāstra* stresses, was equal to a sacrifice (1.126 = 3.96, 5.112, cf. 3.93). So the consecration of the stage reminds us of the words which the Vedic teacher Śātayajñi once spoke in regard of the sacrificial ground: "Verily, this whole earth is divine: on whatever part thereof one may sacrifice (for any one), after enclosing (and consecrating) it with a sacrificial formula, there is a place of worship" (ŚB. III.1.1.4, transl. Eggeling).

This means that, although *pūrvaraṅga* and drama were certainly different things, both of them must originally have had a ritual character. In the classical drama the *pūrvaraṅga* must to a large extent have lost its original function and the words *alam vistareṇa*, often spoken by the *sūtradhāra* immediately after the *nāndī*, obviously express the feeling of actors and audience that the "preliminaries" were a cumbersome neces-

⁴ The date of the *Sāhityadarpaṇa* may have been between 1300 and 1350 (? S. K. De, *Sanskrit Poetics* I, p. 214) or between 1300 and 1384 (P. V. Kane, *History of Sanskrit Poetics*, p. 302).

⁵ *Sāhityadarpaṇa* VI.21 *tatra pūrvaṃ pūrvaraṅgaḥ sabhāpūjā tataḥ paraṃ, kathanam kavisamjñāder nāṭakasyā 'py athā 'mukham*. The first three words are quoted in the commentary on the *Vikramorvaśī* as a verse of Mātṛgupta, see Sylvain Lévi, *Le théâtre indien* II, p. 64.

⁶ *Ibid.*, VI.22 *yan nāṭyavastunaḥ pūrvaṃ raṅgavighnopaśāntaye, kuśilavāḥ prakurvanti pūrvaraṅgaḥ sa ucyate* (Also quoted from the *Bhāvaprakāśa*, Lévi, l.c.).

⁷ NŚ. 36.11 KM *kathayāmi kathāṃ guhyāṃ yan māṃ prechatha svratāḥ, pūrvaraṅgavidhānasya tāṃ ca me samnibodhata*. Otherwise 36.13 C *bravīmi vo hy ayaṃ viprā yan māṃ* (etc.).

⁸ Cf. 36.29 (36.24 KM) *evaṃ pūjādhikārthaṃ pūrvaraṅgaḥ kṛto mayā nānāstotrakṛtair mantrair devatābharcanaṃ prati* and 32.483 *pūrvaraṅgavidhāne tu kartavyo gānajo vidhīḥ, devapūjādhikāraś ca tatra samparikīrtitah*. Even the late *Nāṭakalakṣaṇaratnakośa* by Śāgaranandin (circa 1200-1250 A.D.? P. V. Kane, *op. c.*, p. 423) describes the *pūrvaraṅga* as being (v. 1121.) "in the form of praise of the gods with instrumental and vocal music and dance"; or (v. 2159) as "the worship of the gods".

⁹ S. Konow, *Das indische Drama* (= *Grundriss der Indo-Arischen Philologie und Altertumskunde*, II. Band, 2. Heft D) Berlin-Leipzig, 1920, p. 24: "[er] steht ausserhalb des eigentlichen Dramas", p. 25 "Pūrvaraṅga und Drama sind ursprünglich zwei verschiedene Sachen".

sity that had to be finished as fast as possible (5.163 f.). What had survived of the circumstantial ritual at the time of, e.g., Kālidāsa, cannot be ascertained.¹⁰

2. This study will be limited to the role of the *jarjara* in the *pūrvaraṅga*. The latter consists of a long series of episodes. The *Nāṭyaśāstra* enumerates twenty "members" (*aṅgas*), later theoreticians, such as Sāgaranandin, even twenty-two. From the description in *NŚ*. 5.8-15 the following main elements can be distinguished:

1. *Nirgīta* (5.33-44), which is performed to appease the Daityas and Dānavas¹¹ and to honour the gods. It consists of seven sub-members.¹² Its dangerous character is apparent from the fact that it is performed behind the scenes (*nepathye*) instead of on the stage and from its second name *bahirgīta*, which is said to be a euphemistic term used to please the gods.¹³ Cf. *NŚ*. 5.11 "These *bahirgītas* should be performed by the performers, while standing behind the curtain, by means of string and other instruments."¹⁴ According to Abhinavagupta it consists of nine different parts,¹⁵ as against the ten parts of the *pūrvaraṅga*, beginning with song and ending with the *prarocanā*, which are performed "outside the curtain", that is, on the stage.¹⁶ In this connection it may be noted that the term *bahih* "outside" naturally denoted different places depending on one's viewpoint. Mostly it denotes the place outside the stage, as in the definition which Sylvain Lévi¹⁷ quotes from Bharata: *raṅgabhūmer bahih*

¹⁰ On the word (5.17) *avataṛaṇam* Abhinavagupta (ed. Baroda, vol. I², p. 213 line 1) has the following comment (*avataṛaṇakoṭau chandaso 'kṣarasamaṇi*) *vāmabahirgītā-nuvarti vādyam sribālamūrkhādikutūhalādijananam* "the instrumental music after the *bahirgīta* is meant to awake the interest of women, children, fools and the like". This should not be understood as a depreciatory remark on the *pūrvaraṅga*, since it is merely a quotation from 33.226+ C (p. 173 line 6 from the bottom), 34.197+ KM (p. 641 line 1) *tatraiva cānte pūrvaraṅgavidhānam anuprāpya chandaḥsamenā 'kṣarasamena ca vādyena bahirgītavidhānam tu trilayaṁ vartantiyam ... yatra trisaptapratyāhārā[dya]-vatirṇakoṭis tatra vādyam pravartate ... sribālamūrkhāvākīrṇe raṅge kutūhalajanana-samarthaṁ vādyam samutpannam bhavati*. Cf. also, in a different context, 27.61 C *bālā mūrkhā[h] striyaś caiva hāsyaneopathyayoh sadā (viz. tuṣyanti)*. Cf. Sāgaran. 1157.

¹¹ Cf. 5.40-41 and 58 *daityadānavatuṣṭyartham*, which can only refer to the *nirgīta*.

¹² Cf. 5.44 *nirgītaṁ yaṁ mayā proktaṁ saptarūpasamanvitam*.

¹³ Cf. 5.44 *asūyayā ca devānāṁ bahirgītam idaṁ smṛtam*, 41-42 *etan nirgītam evaṁ tu daityānāṁ spardhayā dvijāḥ, devānāṁ bahumānena bahirgītam idaṁ smṛtam*.

¹⁴ 5.11 *etāni tu bahirgītāny antaryavanikāgataih prayokṛtṛbhīḥ prayojyāni tantribhāṇ-ḍakṛtāni tu*.

¹⁵ Vol. I², p. 210 line 3: *antaryavanikāṅgāni nava prayojyāni*.

¹⁶ *yāni ca yavanikāyā bahir gītakaṇṭhādini prarocanāntāni tāni ...*

¹⁷ *Le théâtre indien* II, p. 62.

*sthānam*¹⁸ *yat, tan nepathyam ity ucyate*. Thus the term *bahirgīta* no doubt denotes the music that was performed behind the scenes.¹⁹ When viewed from the dressing-room, “outside the curtain” (*yavanikāyā bahiḥ*) of course refers to the stage, and “inside” to the *nepathya*.²⁰

The difference between the inauspicious first part of the *pūrvaraṅga* and the following dance and recitation, which took place after the performers “having pushed aside the curtain”²¹ had entered the stage, must originally have been considered essential. This is apparent from the fact that in one of the late chapters of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* the *bahirgīta* is referred to as a separate ritual, distinct from the *pūrvaraṅga* proper,²² but is also the logical consequence of the etymologizing definition in NŚ. 5.7 *yasmād raṅge prayogo 'yaṁ pūrvam eva prayujyate, tasmād ayaṁ pūrvaraṅgo vijñeyo dvijasattamāḥ*, which excludes the *nirgīta* from the *pūrvaraṅga*. As late as the last quarter of the tenth century A. D. Dhanika defined the *pūrvaraṅga* as beginning with the *Utthāpana*.²³ When, however, some late authors state that part of the *pūrvaraṅga* was performed behind the scenes (*yavanikāntaḥ*),²⁴ this may reflect the later practice of omitting the ritual on the stage and beginning immediately with the introduction (*āmukha*) of the play itself. Thus the *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* IV and Sāgaranandin, v. 1125

¹⁸ This is preferable to *bahisthānam* (Lévi).

¹⁹ Otherwise H.-O. Feistel, *Das Vorspiel auf dem Theater*, p. 18 “ausserhalb der [eigentlichen] Musikstücke [hörbar werdende Töne]”, p. 40 “das ausserhalb [der eigentlichen] Musikstücke [wie Utthāpana usw. stattfindende] Musikstück [Āsārīta]”. For *yavanikā* see, e.g., Raghavan, *The Theatre of the Hindus*, p. 161 (who quotes the *Saṅgītacūḍāmaṇi*) and Mankad, *Ancient Indian Theatre* (1950), p. 20.

²⁰ Cf. *antaryavanikām āhur nepathyam*, quoted from Sāgara (Lévi II, p. 64). Sāgaranandin, 2186-7 has *antaryamanikā* but *yavanikā*.

²¹ 5.12 *vighaṭya vai yavanikām*.

²² See 32.460 (410 KM) *prayujya ca bahirgītaṁ pūrvaraṅgaṁ prayojayet, pūrvaraṅge pravṛtte tu nāṭyadvāraṁ samāśrayet*. In the abridged *Tryaśra* form of the *pūrvaraṅga* the *bahirgīta* seems to have been skipped, if at least 5.146 (140 B) *kartavyaḥ pūrvaraṅgas tu tryaśro 'py utthāpanādikaḥ* may be interpreted in this way. Ghosh's translation “(With this kind of measurement ...) should be performed the Tryaśra Preliminaries which include the Utthāpana and such other items” is hardly correct. Feistel's statement to the effect that the causative *prayojayati* was used in the sense “to perform” (*op. c.*, p. 19) is correct for the present of the active, where it takes the place of *prayujakti*. Hence *prayojayet* but *prayujīta*, ptc. *prayukta*, adj. necessitatis *prayoktavya*, *prayojya*, gerund *prayujya*, inf. *prayoktum*, noun of the agent *prayoktr*. The ptc. *saṁprayojīta* (5.46) is, as far as I can see, rare.

²³ Ad *Daśarūpa* 3.2: *pūrvam rajyate 'sminn iti pūrvaraṅgaḥ, utthāpanādirprayogaḥ*.

²⁴ Lévi II, p. 64 quotes from a commentary on the *Saṅgītakalpataru: sūtradhārākhyo bharato naṭa eva dikpālāstutijarapūjādīnāndyantaṁ pūrvaraṅgaṁ javanikāntar vidadhīta*. The text itself, as quoted by Lévi, p. 27, reads: *dikpālāstutijarapūjāntam eva pūrvaraṅgaṁ nāndīyatiriktam kṛtvā sūtradhāre vinirgate tatsamagūṇatvāt sthāpaka eva sūtradhāro nāndīm javanikāntaḥ paṭhivā raṅgabhūmāv āgatya kāvyam āsthāpayet*.

state that only the *nāndī* is important but that the other *aṅgas*, such as the *Utthāpana*, can be skipped.²⁵ Cf. Sāgaranandin 1093 f., 1157.

2. *Utthāpana* (NŚ. 5.60-89, cf. 14.44ff.), which consists of four "metrical periods".²⁶ The *gītakas* which form an introduction to it seem to be part of it.²⁷

3. *Parivartana* (5.90-101, cf. 5.23), salutation of the Dikpālas.

4. *Caturthakāra*, a *pūjā* to the *jarjara*, etc. (5.101-104).

5. *Nāndī*, benediction of the gods, the brahmins and the king (5.105-113).

6. *Jarjaraśloka*, worship of the *jarjara* (5.118)

7. *Vināmana*, the inclining of the *jarjara* (5.119)

8. *Cārī*, a dance (5.120-127)

9. *Mahācārī* (5.128-133).

10. *Trigata* (5.136-140), cf. *Trika* (5.16).

11. *Prarocanā* "laudation" and exit of the *sūtradhāra* (5.141-142).

The author of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* clearly considered the *utthāpana* and *parivartana* the two parts which immediately follow the *bahirgīta*.²⁸ The exact meaning of the first of these words was apparently no longer known to him. His explanation is the first of a series of etymologizing definitions (5.227):

*yasmād utthāpayanty ādau prayogaṃ nāndīpāṭhakāḥ
pūrvam eva tu raṅge 'smimś tasmād utthāpanaṃ smrtam*

"Because the reciters of the benediction first (v.l. here) "produce" a performance for the first time on this stage, this is known as an *utthāpana*." It is at once clear that this definition is as irrelevant as, e.g., that of *cārī* in 5.27: *śṛṅgārasya pracaraṇāc cārī saṃparikīrtitā* "The *cārī* is so called because it consists of movements depicting the Erotic Sentiment" (transl. Ghosh). The sense "to excite, to produce", which the author here apparently assigns to *utthāpayati*, is very rare indeed.²⁹ Elsewhere in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* the verb is used in its current sense "to erect", e.g., 2.55f.

²⁵ See K. H. Trivedi, *The Nāṭya Darpaṇa*, p. 176.

²⁶ According to Abhinavagupta (I², p. 227 line 7) Parivartas are "repetitions in singing": *parivartā gānakriyābhyāvṛttayaḥ, te catvāraḥ*, That they were sung is also apparent from 4.325, 32.462, 472. Feistel, p. 50, rightly rejects the translation "walking-round" and proposes "metrische Periode". One *parivarta* consists of four *saṃnipātas*, each of which corresponds to a pāda of a stanza, cf. 5.65 *catvāraḥ saṃnipātās ca parivartaḥ sa ucyaṭe*.

²⁷ See however Feistel, p. 27f.

²⁸ Cf. 5.14 *tataś cotthāpanaṃ kāryaṃ parivartanaṃ eva ca*, 5.156 *vṛtte hy utthāpane budhāḥ kṛte ca parivartane*, 5 Add. 2 *ādāv utthāpanī kāryā parivartanas tathā bhavet*, ibid. 4 *utthāpanasyā 'ṣṭakalaṃ parivartanasya ṣaṭkalam*.

²⁹ The PW. quotes *reṇum utthāpayati* from *Raghuvamśa* 7.36 for the meaning "erregen, hervorbringen". For *vastūthāpanam* see below, section 3.

stambham utthāpayet "he should erect a pillar".³⁰ But even apart from the curious expression *utthāpayati prayogam* the verse of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* does not make sense, with the redundancy of *āḍau* (a reading also occurring in the *Bhāvaṇṇakāśa*) and *pūrvam*, or of the variant readings *atra* and *asmin*.

On account of the common meaning of *utthāpayati* the general opinion has been that the term *Utthāpana* referred to the erecting of the *jarjara* on the stage.³¹ This has, however, been contested by Feistel,³² who is certainly right in maintaining that in the detailed prescriptions of NŚ. 5.59ff. (=60ff. C) there is no explicit statement about the erection of the *jarjara*. He observes that it constantly remains, now in the hand of one of the assistants, then in that of the *sūtradhāra* himself, who makes certain movements with it, lowers it and lifts it again (5.81, 113, 121 = 83, 119, 127 C).³³ The last thing that is said about the *jarjara* is that the *sūtradhāra* returns it to his assistant. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary Feistel assumes that the latter still has it in his hand when, at the end of the *pūrvaraṅga*, he goes off the stage. In modern performances, it is true, it seems that the *jarjara* is often³⁴ left standing on the stage, which must then be explained as a deviation from the ancient practice. Feistel, therefore, concludes, that the only possible object of *utthāpayati* is *prayogam*, as it is in the definition quoted above. This he translates (p. 29) "Weil die Rezitatoren der Nāṇḍi hier (d.h. an dieser Stelle des Vorspiels) eine Auf-führung [and zwar nicht irgendeine sondern] eben die erste, zur Entstehung kommen lassen, deshalb ist [dieses Glied] autoritativ als 'Auf-stellung' gelehrt." Although he fully admits the artificial character of the etymologies given in the definitions³⁵, he feels compelled to take this one

³⁰ The reading *dr̥ṣṭvā cotthāpanaṁ hr̥ṣṭvā* in 31, p. 488 line 27 KM is corrupt for *dr̥ṣṭvā cotthāya hr̥ṣṭāṅgi*, 22.249 KM (258 B), 24.256 C. The expression *utthāpanavādyam* in 33.232+ (p. 176 line 12) is not clear to me in the context.

³¹ E.g., S. Konow, *Das indische Drama*, p. 23 (see below, fn. 47), J. Gonda, "Ursprung und Wesen des indischen Dramas", *Acta Or.* 19, p. 367.

³² *Das Vorspiel auf dem Theater, Ein Beitrag zur Frühgeschichte des klassischen indischen Schauspiels* (Dissertation Tübingen, 1969), pp. 29 and 116f.

³³ This, however, is based on an unacceptable alteration of the text, see below p. 264 and fn. 108.

³⁴ "z(um) T(eil)", Feistel, p. 117 n.1, who refers to Gargi, *Folk Theatre of India*, pp. 48, 168, 191 (not accessible to me). Konow, *Das indische Drama*, p. 37, also says: "Deshalb heisst sein Banner *jarjara* und es wird als Zeichen des Schutzes Indra's bei allen Bühnenvorstellungen aufgestellt (Bh. 1, 8f.)", but Bharata is, as far as I can see, absolutely silent about it. Cf. also Konow, p. 24: "Der *sūtradhāra* streut Blumen aus, bringt das Banner des Indra an und reinigt sich aus dem Wasserkrug" and Cilappatikāram 3.128f. *talaikkōlai etir mukamāka vaitta piṇ*.

³⁵ P. 29: "Dieses und die folgenden Vorspielglieder werden mittels 'Etymologien' (nirukta: cf. NŚ. 6.12-13) definiert."

seriously and to accept the possibility of an idiomatic expression *prayogaṃ utthāpayati* "eine Aufführung zur Entstehung kommen lassen" as the origin of the noun *utthāpana* in the technical sense it has here.

3. Some technical terms of Indian dramaturgy are, indeed, derived from *ut-thāpayati*. There is, first, *utthāpaka* "challenge".³⁶ What is more interesting is that also *utthāpana* occurs in a technical sense in the compound *vastūthāpana*. It will here be briefly examined to show that it cannot contribute anything to our understanding of the name of the second "member" of the *pūrvaraṅga*.

Various meanings or shades of meaning seem to have been attached to the term *vastūthāpana* in the course of time. The *Nāṭyaśāstra* seems to take it in the sense of "Action (event?) which is fancied as based upon [a situation which may be] agitated or not, and which consists of a combination of all sentiments".³⁷ If this interpretation is more or less correct, *utthāpana* must have meant something like "evocation"³⁸ of certain events which were not acted on the stage. Abhinavagupta, however, illustrates it with a reference to a scene in the *Kṛtyārāvaṇa* which is full of emotions.³⁹ Later theoreticians are more explicit and on them Lévi based his definition "la création d'objets par des moyens magiques ou des procédés analogiques."⁴⁰ A dramatist may be said to "evoke" the image of certain events which cannot be acted, for instance because they are of a supernatural character, but he cannot "evoke" the image of a performance (*prayoga*).

The reason why Feistel, in spite of this difficulty, sticks to the explanation of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is, as we have seen, that the *jarjaraprayoga*, the "performance with the *jarjara*", in his opinion did not justify the idea that the *jarjara* was erected on the stage. Lienhard has since accepted Feistel's

³⁶ "défi", S. Lévi, I, p. 91.

³⁷ *NS*, 22.60 C, 20.59 KM, 20.70 B *sarvarasasamāsakṛtaṃ savidravāvidravāśrayaṃ vāpi, nāṭyaṃ vibhāvayate yat tad vastūthāpanaṃ smṛtaṃ* (v.l. *jñeyam* B KM). Here *savidravaṃ vidravāśrayam* in C does not make sense. Abhinava, who reads *vidravaiḥ saha, tair vihinaiḥ* (ca), apparently had the reading of B and KM before him. The term *vastūthāpana* he explains by *vastūnām: bahūnā[m arthānā?]m, utthāpanaḥ: prasaṅgāgatanibandhanam* "a composition of things that have accidentally arrived (occurred?)." Cf. Sāgaranandin 1372ff. *nānārasayuktaṃ bandhūnāṃ ceṣṭitam*.

³⁸ M. M. Ghosh's translation "Elevation of the Plot" is no great help.

³⁹ *yathā tatraiva* [that is, in the K.] *Āṅgadād abhidṛyamāṇāyā Mandodaryā bhayaṃ, Āṅgadasyo 'tsāhaḥ, Rāvaṇaṃ dṛṣṭvā tasyaiva hi "etenāpi surā jita" ityādi vadato hāsaḥ, Rāvaṇasyā 'tikrodhaḥ ...*

⁴⁰ *Le théâtre indien* I, p. 92. Cf. *PW* VI, col. 856 "das Erfinden von Dingen, das Vorführen unwirklicher Dinge." This is mainly based upon *Daśarūpa* 2.59 *māyādyutthāpitaṃ vastu vastūthāpanam iṣyate* (copied in *Sāhityadarpaṇa* 6.134).

explanation, although he rightly objects to Feistel's translation "Aufstellung" for *utthāpana*: "Eine Aufführung kann schwerlich 'aufgestellt' ... werden."⁴¹

The solution proposed by Feistel therefore raises several questions. In order to answer them it will be necessary to touch upon some aspects of the Indian drama which will be dealt with at greater length elsewhere. Here the following two questions will be discussed:

a. What was the original meaning of *utthāpana*?

b. What were the successive movements made with the *jarjara* during the so-called *jarjaraprayoga*?

They are so intertwined that it will not always be possible to keep the one separated from the other.

4. According to the old tradition which has been preserved in the first chapter of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* the legendary first performance of a drama took place before a gathering of the gods while they were celebrating Indra's Banner Festival. From this tradition some interesting conclusions can be drawn about the origin of the Sanskrit drama, which will be discussed elsewhere. The only thing that is of immediate importance in the context of the present study is the fact that Indra is said to have given, after the performance, his *dhvaja* to the actors. In so far as this *dhvaja* is used in connection with dramatic performances it is called *jarjara* (*NS.* 1.69). Since there is no reason to question this tradition about the fundamental identity of *jarjara* and *indraddhvaja*,⁴² the answer to the purely formal question whether the word *utthāpana* was used with respect to the *indraddhvaja* is bound to have some consequences for the *jarjara*. Besides, the gods that are supposed to reside in the *jarjara*⁴³ characterize it as a replica of the cosmic tree.

Ever since the *Kauśikasūtra* and Garga, one of the oldest authorities on the Indra festival,⁴⁴ the verb *ut-thā-* has been used with reference to the

⁴¹ See *III*, 15, p. 57f. Lienhard therefore suggests a different meaning for *utthāpana*, viz. "Antrieb" or "Belebung" and refers (p. 58 n.3) to the meaning "antreiben, in Gang bringen, beleben" of *utthāpayati*.

⁴² In fact, the *jarjara* as described in the first chapter also has the function of Indra's *vajra*, but this is ignored in the Indian tradition, apart from the fact that the *vajra* is among the powers and deities that are said to reside in the *jarjara* (*NS.* 1.91, 3.78), just as the *yūpa*, the sacrificial stake, is said to be a *vajra*, e.g. *SB.* IV.4.2 *vajro vai yūpo*, IV.4.10, etc.

⁴³ See fn. 54. For a similar cosmic symbolism connected with the sacrificial stake cf., e.g., *SB.* IV.4.13.

⁴⁴ Garga is quoted as an authority by Varāhamihira in his *Brhatsaṃhitā* and by the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*, see J. J. Meyer, *Trilogie altindischer Mächte und Feste der Vegetation* (Zürich-Leipzig, 1937) III, p. 17.

"rising" of Indra's pole.⁴⁵ The special religious importance attached to the upright position of the *indrādhvaja* (at the inauguration of the new year, as some texts add) accounts for the stereotyped use of *utthita indradhvaja* in similes, such as Rām. II.71.24 crit. ed. *utthitau ca nara-vyāghrau ... varṣātāpariklinnau prthag indradhvajāv iva*. It is natural to suppose that on the stage a similar position of the *jarjara* was equally important. On the other hand it is clear that this does not necessarily mean that the *jarjara* (for which preferably a bamboo staff was chosen) had to be erected on the stage.

5. This leads us to a consideration of the second question: what exactly

⁴⁵ Cf. *Kauś.S.* 140.3 *śraṇaṇeno 'tthāpanam*, 140.7 *athe'ndram utthāpayanti*, 140.9 *adbhutaṁ hi vimānoththitam upatiṣṭhante* (cf. Gonda, *JAOS.* 87 (1967), pp. 419, 423), *VarBS.* 42.37 *uttiṣṭhati śakraketau* (loc. absol.), 38 *śraṇaṇena dvādaśyām utthāpyo 'nyatra vā śraṇaṇāt*, 58 *utthāpayel lakṣma sahasracakṣuṣaḥ*, 59 *ketum utthāpayec ca*, 61 *utthānam iṣṭam aśubham*, 67 *utthitam*, *Utpala ad VarBS.* 42.61 *indrādhvajasaṁutthānam* (by the side of *ucchrīyamāna*), *Viṣṇudharmottarapur.* II.155.18 *yantrēṇo 'tthāpanaṁ kuryāc chakraheṭoḥ samāhitāḥ*, 23 *utthāne ca praveśe ca*, 24 (*kālavit sapurohitāḥ*) *pūjayed utthitam ketum*, II.157.4 (in a mantra) *uttiṣṭha, Kālikāpurāṇa* 90.1 *śakroththāna-*, 90.43 *śakroththāpana-* (Meyer III, p. 101), *Bhaviṣyapur.* II.2.8.82 **śakram utthāpayet* (Meyer, p. 48 n.1.), *Hemādri, Caturvargacintāmaṇi* III, 2, p. 908 *śakradhvajotthāpanam*, *sthāpayec Chakram, Śakroththāpanam*, p. 910 (*Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*) *Śakram utthāpayed rājā*, p. 911 *Śakram utthāpayet, na cotthāpyaḥ Puraṁdharāḥ, kāle ca sthāpīte Śakre, Śakram notthāpayed yadi*, p. 912 (*Bhaviṣyottara*) *indrādhvajasaṁutthānam*, p. 980 *utthāpayet, Mhbh.* V.58.15 *indraketur ivo 'tthāya sarvābharāṇabhūṣitāḥ* (v.l. *indrādhvaja ivo 'tthitāḥ*) I.162.2, IX.16.52, *Rām.* II.71.9 crit.ed. *utthāpyamānaḥ Śakrasya yantradhvaja iva cyutaḥ, Agnipurāṇa* 102.26 *saṁutthāpya sumantraiḥ ca*. Cf. *Viṣṇudharmottarapur.* II.155.2 *tataḥ śakradhvajasthānam madhye saṁstthāpya yatnataḥ*. Other idiomatic expressions are *ut-srj-*, especially in the *Mahābhārata*: VI.114.84, VII.68.65 *indrādhvaja ivo 'tsrṣṭaḥ*, VII.48.11 *indrādhvajāv ivo 'tsrṣṭau*, often also *uc-chri-*, e.g. I.504* line 5 *ucchrīyate*, I.64.14 *ucchrīyadhvajasaṁnibham*, I.162.2 *śakradhvajam ivo 'cchritam* (v.l. *utthitam*, see above), VII.63.7 *parighaiḥ ... ucchrītendrādhvajopamaiḥ*, IX.16.52 *indrādhvaja ivo 'cchritāḥ*, I.57.20 *kriyate ('ty)ucchrāyo nṛpāiḥ, VarBS.* 42.96 *ucchrāyena praveśe, Utpala ad VarBS.* *ucchrīte tasmin*, Garga (*ibidem*) *ucchrīyamāṇa, Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* II.154.13 *sauvarṇam ucchrītaṁ divyaṁ śakradhvajam iti śrutam*, II.157.1 and 2 *Śakrocchrāya-*, Yājñavalkya I.147 *Śakrapāte tatho 'cchrāye*, *Hemādri, Caturvargacintāmaṇi* III, 2, p. 401 *atha śakradhvajocchrāyavidhiḥ*, p. 402 *ketunā ... ucchrītena, ucchrāyo, nṛpatis tūcchrāyisyati*, p. 403 *ucchrāyaṇam, ketoh samucchrāye* (Meyer III, p. 28), III, 2, p. 911 (*Devīpurāṇa*) *samucchrāyet, ucchrāyo*. In a different context (with reference to the pillars of the playhouse) *Abhinavagupta* (I², p. 58 line 6) paraphrases *utthāpanam* with *ucchrāyaṇam*. In the *Rāmayaṇa* there is, by the side of *utthāpyamāna* (see above) also an occurrence of *ud-dhū-* in IV.16.37 (346* crit.ed.) *indrādhvaja ivo 'ddhūtaḥ*. For the epics see J. J. Meyer, *Das Weib im altindischen Epos*, p. 210 n.3, whose material has here been used. In *Prakrit* the verb *ubbhei* (**urdhvayati*) is used in the story of *Domuha*, see *Jacobi, Ausgewählte Erzählungen in Māhārāṣṭrī*, p. 40, lines 11, 15, 18. In the *Agnipurāṇa* 102.8 the equally rare *ā-rop-* is used: *dhvajā-ropana, āropyamāna*. In the Vedic language the verbs used for the raising of the sacrificial stake are *uc-chri-*, *ud-yam-* and *(un-)mi-*. The exact reference in the simile *RS.* I.10.1 *ūd vamiśam iva yemire* is not clear.

happened during the *jarjaraprayoga*?⁴⁶ Since opinions differ, a more detailed analysis of the text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is necessary.

When the seven parts of the *nirgīta* have been performed behind the scenes, the first thing to take place on the stage is the *gīta(ka)*, music in praise of the gods. Thereupon a song is started which is called the *utthāpanī dhruvā*⁴⁷ and serves as an introduction to the act of carrying the *jarjara* onto the stage. The *utthāpana* itself consists of four "metrical periods". At the beginning of the second *parivarta* the *sūtradhāra* enters (5.67 *sūtradhārapraveśana*), accompanied by his two assistants (*pāri-pārśvika*).⁴⁸ One of them carries the *jarjara* (5.70), the other the golden pitcher (*bhṛṅgāra*), while the *sūtradhāra*, who has flowers in his hands, goes between them.⁴⁹ It is a very important moment. All three of them must be ritually pure and cheerful (*sumanas*).⁵⁰ They all perform some

⁴⁶ Cf., e.g., NŚ. 5.53 *jarjarasya prayoge tu tuṣṭā vighnavināyakaḥ*.

⁴⁷ NŚ. 5.60 *gītakānte tataś cāpi kāryā hy utthāpanī dhruvā*. Konow, *Das indische Drama*, p. 23, defines *utthāpana* as "ein Lied zur Aufstellung des Banners des Indra (*jarjara*)." This is of course a slip of the pen. The *dhruvās* serve as an introduction to a new *aṅga* ("member") of the *pūrvaraṅga*, cf., e.g., the *dhruvā parivartanī* (5.91) with which the *parivartana* begins. For this reason alone it is clear that *utthāpanī* as the name of a *dhruvā* is quite different from *utthāpanī* "concluding verse" in *KauśS.* 82.31, 83.23; see the commentary on 83.21. See in general on the *dhruvās* NŚ. 32.1ff. and cf., e.g., 32.444 *prāsādīkī, naiṣkrāmīkī, prāveśīkī*, and for the last (*prāveśīkī dhruvā* 32.365), P. V. Kane, *History of Sanskrit Poetics*, p. 43. Only once *utthāpana* is used in the particular sense of *dhruvā utthāpanī*, viz. in the Appendix to chapter 5, v. 4. In this later addition a more detailed description of the *utthāpana* is given (v. 15), which ends with the words (v. 18) *evam utthāpanī kāryā pūrvaraṅgaprayoktṛbhīḥ*.

⁴⁸ For the derivation of *pāripārśvika* from the Sūtra word *paripārśva* "being at or by one's side" (Wackernagel, *Altindische Grammatik* II/1, p. 313) see (Wackernagel-)Debrunner, *op. c.* II/2, p. 309ff. It is a well-known fact that some editions (KM, C) read *pāripārśvika*, but others (B with Abhinavagupta) *pāripārśvika*, and that both readings are also found in the manuscripts of the *Mahābhārata* (XII.129.9, where in the preceding verse the word is explained as *pārśve sthāpyaḥ*). *pāripārśvika* must be the older form as it occurs not only in the Bhāsa manuscripts (e.g., *Abhiṣekanāṭaka* I.1.6) but also in the Aśvaghōṣa fragments and in Kālidāsa, *Mālav.* I.1.2. (v.1.), Sāgaranandin 1118.

⁴⁹ 5.70 *bhṛṅgārajarjaradharau bhavetām pāripārśvikau, madhye tu sūtradhṛk tābhyām vṛtaḥ pañcapadīm vrajet*. Abhinavagupta here explains the two objects ritually: *bhṛṅgārah* : *saucāya*, *jarjaro* : *vighnaśāntyai* although in his note ad 1.60 B he identifies this pitcher with Varuṇa's present, cf. I², p. 28 line 1 *bhṛṅgārah* : *pāripārśvikopayogi*. For an explanation of the mythological background of the three figures see the *Proceedings of the XXVII International Congress of Orientalists*, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 13th-19th August 1967 (Wiesbaden 1971).

⁵⁰ 5.69 *dikṣitāḥ śucayaś caiva praviṣeyuḥ samam trayah*. For the ritual importance of being *sumanas* see, e.g., the references in *IIJ*, 4, pp. 272, 278 and especially such descriptions of the Indra festival as Mhbh. I.507*, lines 4-8 *kriḍitvā nṛpaśāsanāt, sabhājayitvā rājānaḥ kṛtvā narmāśritāḥ kathāḥ ramante nāgarāḥ sarve tathā jāna-padaīḥ saha, sūtās ca māgadhās caiva naṭante naṭanartakaiḥ, prītyā ca naraśārdūla sarve cakrur mahotsavam* and Hemādri, *Caturvargacintāmaṇi* II.2, p. 409 line 6 *yāvaco 'cchrita āste tāvat pauraḥ sadā hrṣṭāḥ*.

complicated steps and the *sūtradhāra* then strews the flowers in the centre of the stage (5.74). In accordance with the cosmic meaning of the various parts of the stage after its consecration (3.20ff.), this part represents the cosmic centre and Brahmā's seat (*brāhma maṇḍala*). With a ceremonious salutation to Brahmā ends this second *parivarta*.

The third "period" (5.77-78) consists of three acts, viz. the *pradakṣiṇa* of the centre, the sipping of water (*ācamana*) and the taking up of the *iarjara* (*jarjaragrahaṇa*). They are described as follows: the *sūtradhāra* rises quickly from the *maṇḍala* (in the centre).⁵¹ This can only be understood in connection with his preceding salutation of Brahmā: "with the hand three salutations should be made on the floor."⁵² Whatever may have been the exact way in which these salutations were performed, it is clear that the *sūtradhāra* must have been kneeling or prostrate during the "salutations". His next acts have a somewhat enigmatic character. The special direction that the *sūtradhāra* should rise quickly is in line with what follows. After going round the centre with very specific dance steps (*pradakṣiṇa*) he calls the assistant who carries the golden pitcher, performs the ablution (*śauca*) and sips water (*ācamana*) in the right way. "He should sprinkle his body in due order with water and after having carefully purified himself he should exactly (*yatnataḥ*) at the moment when the [fourth and last] *saṁnipāta* [of this third metrical period] begins, grab the *iarjara* which destroys (all) obstacles."⁵³ Here the third *parivarta* ends.

6. A few observations may here be inserted. It is clear that the *utthāpana*, although traditionally regarded as one separate "member" of the *pūrvaraṅga*, in fact consists of two basically different elements. The *sūtradhāra* enters the stage "with the wish to worship Brahmā" (5.71 *Brahmaṇo yajaneccayā*). At the end of the salutation, however, he must again purify himself very carefully, in spite of the fact that he was already *dīkṣita* when entering the stage. This shows that his next act must have been particularly important.

⁵¹ 5.78 *utthāya maṇḍalāt tūrṇam*.

⁵² 5.75-76 *abhivādanāni kāryāni trīṇi hastena bhūtale, kālaprakarṣahetoś ca pādānāṁ pravibhāgataḥ*. M. M. Ghosh translates "and to measure the length of time during the salutation he should thrice touch the ground with his hand, and his steps should be [suitably] divided." From a text-critical point of view the correctness of *abhivādanāni* (5.73 B), although metrically correct, is open to doubt. In 5.88 the verse recurs with *vandanāny atha kāryāni*.

⁵³ 5.81 *bhṛṅgāradhāram āhūya śaucam cāpi samācaret, yathānyāyam tu kartvayā tena hy ācamanakriyā* (82) *ātmaprokṣaṇam eva 'dbhiḥ kartavyam tu yathākramam, prayatnakṛtaśaucena sūtradhāreṇa yatnataḥ* (83) *saṁnipātasamam grāhyo jarjaro vighnajarjaraḥ*. Cf. *Cilappatikāram* 3.121-122.

A second point can here only be touched upon in passing. So far it seems to have escaped notice that the relation between the *jarjara* and the gods was much more complex than might be inferred from the name *indrādhvaja*. Although it is ideally identical with Indra's banner, the gods who reside in its five joints are (from the top to the bottom) Brahmā, Śaṅkara, Viṣṇu, Skanda and the Mahānāgas Śeṣa, Vāsuki and Takṣaka.⁵⁴ Its cosmic character is, accordingly, beyond doubt. The deities mentioned personify in different ways the totality of the Cosmos, which is symbolized by the centre.⁵⁵ The *jarjara* represents the world tree, which is rooted in the nether world (the Nāgas)⁵⁶ and reaches into heaven (Brahmā), whereas in its very middle joint Viṣṇu is located as the connecting link between the upper and nether worlds.⁵⁷ Indra, however, is absent from the very *upakaraṇa* which was his present to the actors (1.59) and which represents his *dhvaja* and *vajra*. As will be argued elsewhere the explanation is to be found in Indra's character of a seasonal god. There are, indeed, if I am not mistaken, traits of a more complex nature in the figure of Indra than are mostly recognized. At the end of the year⁵⁸ a new pole was erected (*utthāpita*), as a reiteration of Indra's cosmogonical act of "propping up" (*ut-tambh-*) the world pillar to which the Vedic poets often refer. As long as the banner festival lasted, the *dhvaja* was actually believed to be identical with Indra⁵⁹ but after the removal of the pole the god's role had temporarily ended and he reassumed his more modest task of *dikpāla* of the East (5.94). During the rest of the year the pillar belonged to the gods of the totality, in particular to Brahmā, Viṣṇu and the Nāgas.

It was necessary to point in passing to these facts because they are of importance for the interpretation of the *sūtradhāra*'s strange behaviour and for the connection that exists between the two parts of the *Utthāpana*. In spite of Indra's prominence in the first chapter of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, it is Brahmā who, as the grandfather of the world (*lokapitāmaha*), is actually the highest god. He is the creator of dramatic art and to him, as a god of the totality, the *maṇḍala* in the centre of the stage is dedicated. This cosmic centre, however, is also the place where the world tree was believed to be standing. The *sūtradhāra*, accordingly, has just been worshipping the place where mythologically the tree either is standing (after Indra's

⁵⁴ 1.92-93, 3.78-79. The *jarjara* is *pañcaparvā caturgranthiḥ* (23.174).

⁵⁵ For Skanda this is probable but it still has to be proved.

⁵⁶ For the *nāgas* at the foot of the cosmic tree see *India Maior (Congratulatory Volume J. Gonda)*, p. 151.

⁵⁷ See *IIJ*, 13, p. 283.

⁵⁸ *Mhbh.* 1.57.18 *gate saṁvatsare*.

⁵⁹ See J. J. Meyer, *Trilogie III, passim*.

demiurgic act, the “second creation”)⁶⁰ or should be standing (before that act). What then follows is the end of the *aṅga* which bears the name *utthāpana*. This cannot mean that “die Aufführung des Schauspiels endlich in Gang kommt” because it is only one of a series of religious ceremonies which have nothing at all to do with the drama proper. With each of these ceremonies special gods are pleased or appeased and in this connection it is worthy of notice that the god who is specifically pleased at the *utthāpana* is Brahmā,⁶¹ not Indra (whose name is not mentioned at all). At first sight this might perhaps seem an argument which proves that the *utthāpana* cannot have had any connection with the *jarjara* but this conclusion, as has been argued above, would be wrong. First, *utthāpana* was exactly the technical term for the erection of the *indradvaja* at the banner festival and can, therefore, be expected to have also been used with reference to the *jarjara*, and, second, there was also a close connection between the *jarjara* and Brahmā, who resided on the one hand in its upper joint and, on the other, in the *maṇḍala* in the centre of the stage.⁶²

Just as Indra’s banner was supposed to be standing in the centre,⁶³ so the only appropriate place for the *jarjara* would have been in the *brāhma maṇḍala*. The chief difficulty lies in the words *grāhyo jarjaraḥ*. The verb is the characteristic term used in connection with the *jarjara*, cf. 5.83, 86 *jarjaragrahaṇa*, 84 *grhītvā jarjaram*. It is, however, also used when one is about to fashion a *jarjara* from a stalk of bamboo, cf. 23.172 “One should carefully seize in accordance with the ritual rules the bamboo in order to make a *jarjara* of it”,⁶⁴ 23.176 “after having worshipped the bamboo according to the rules one should seize (grab?) it to make a *jarjara* out of it”.⁶⁵

The act of seizing or grabbing which forms the end of the third *parivarta*⁶⁶ is obviously a ritual of high importance: the preceding ablution proves this sufficiently. Why then the element of hurry in it? Not only must the *sūtradhāra* rise quickly, but the third and fourth “metrical periods” (in the latter of which he only makes movements with his hands

⁶⁰ See *History of Religions* 10, p. 104ff.

⁶¹ See 5.50 *tathā cotthāpane yukte Brahmā tuṣṭo bhaved iha* “and also, when the *utthāpana* has been performed, Brahmā is pleased”. The last word is here, as often, a mere stop-gap.

⁶² See 1.94 *raṅgapīṭhasya madhye tu svayaṁ Brahmā pratiṣṭhitaḥ, iṣṭyartham raṅga-madhye tu kriyate puṣpamokṣaṇam* and 3.23 (at the consecration of the playhouse) *padmopaviṣṭam Brahmāṇam tasya madhye niveśayet*.

⁶³ *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* II.155.2 *madhye*.

⁶⁴ 23.173 *saṁgrāhyo vidhinā veṇur jarjarārtham prayatnataḥ*.

⁶⁵ 23.176 *upāsya vidhivad veṇuṁ grhṇīyāj jarjaram prati*.

⁶⁶ 5.83-84 *pradakṣiṇādyo vijñeyo jarjaragrahaṇāntakaḥ*.

and feet) are also to be performed in a quick tempo (5.84, 87 *drute laye*).

The second assistant is nowhere referred to, but since it is not stated that he puts the *jarjara* down, it must be assumed that he still has the *jarjara* in his hand. When the *sūtradhāra*, after salutations to god Brahmā, calls the assistant who carries the golden pitcher, the other assistant probably also comes nearer. Immediately after the ablution the *sūtradhāra* seizes the *jarjara*, apparently from his assistant's hand.

Why, then, does this "member" bear the name *utthāpana*? The only one who is "saluted" is Brahmā (5.75 *abhivandyo Brahmā*), whereas the worship of the *jarjara* takes place much later (5.102 *pūjanam jarjarasya*). It seems that at the time of Abhinavagupta (*circa* 1000 A.D.) there was no longer a living tradition and that he, too, groped in the dark: "For nothing whatsoever has been erected by [the ritual which merely consists of] the salutation of Brahmā and the addressing of the *jarjara*. Also in the beginning of the *parivartana* [its?] function of *utthāpaka* is due to its serving to appease the 'obstacles'".⁶⁷

During the next *aṅga*, viz, the *parivartana*, the *sūtradhāra* "salutes" the deities of the various quarters (5.94-96). No mention is made of the *jarjara* in this passage (5.90-101).

What follows I consider a separate member of the *pūrvaraṅga*, although the Indian theorists regarded it as part of the *parivartana*.⁶⁸ A fourth person, the *caturthakāra*, enters the stage with flowers in his hands (5.102 *puṣpāṇi pragṛhya*), in the prescribed way.⁶⁹ It is a meaningful moment, which is elsewhere referred to as "the entrance of the fourth man".⁷⁰ The flowers are offered as *pūjā* to the *jarjara*, to the orchestra,⁷¹ and to the

⁶⁷ See Abhinavagupta (vol. I², p. 234 line 2) *na hi brahmābhivādanajarjarābhimantraṇamātreṇa kiṃ cid apy utthāpitaṃ bhavati vighnaśamanopayogitveno 'utthāpakatvaṃ parivartanādāv api syāt*. For the *vighnas* cf. 1.65ff., 5.53 *jarjarasya prayoge tu tuṣṭā vighnavināyakāḥ*.

⁶⁸ But see below, fn. 72.

⁶⁹ Abhinavagupta here refers to the *sthānam tu vaiṣṇavam*, with which the *sūtradhāra* and his assistants had entered the stage (5.69).

⁷⁰ See 33.227 + (p. 174 line 15 C) = 34.198 + (p. 641 line 10 KM) *caturthakārapraveśe (-praveśeṣu KM)*.

⁷¹ Or the instruments! Ghosh renders 5.103 *kutapasya sarvasya* by "all the musical instruments", although elsewhere he takes *kutapa* as meaning "the members of the orchestra", see Introduction to his translation, p. LII, Text I², Introduction p. XLVII, where he points to contradicting (or different) explanations by Abhinavagupta. Cf., e.g., I², p. 64 line 5f. (ad 2.82 B) *sarṇphetaḥkagāyana-vādaka-samūhaḥ*, but otherwise, e.g., I², p. 72 line 6. Also Subba Rao in Appendix 6 to the first volume (2nd ed.) of the Baroda edition (I², p. 445) refers to "the group of musicians"; cf. Feistel, p. 66. That a *pūjā* to the instruments is by no means excluded is proved by modern practices, see below, p. 258.

sūtradhāra.⁷² During his *pūjana* the singing is interrupted, only *stobhas* being allowed (5.104). After offering his *pūjā* the “fourth man” makes his exit.

7. Although this study only has a limited aim, viz. to examine what the *Nāṭyaśāstra* can teach us about the nature of the *utthāpana*, it may be useful to interrupt the line of argument for a while and to insert, as a *parergon*, an attempt at an interpretation, in the light of mythology, of the data thus far gathered. These considerations, which will be only briefly sketched, will be discussed in a wider context in *Varuṇa and Vidūṣaka*.

It has been argued elsewhere⁷³ that, since the *jarjara* is said to be Indra’s present to the actors, and the golden pitcher Varuṇa’s (1.59-60), and since the pitcher is known as a symbol of the nether world,⁷⁴ the two assistants who enter the stage with these two paraphernalia can be explained as impersonating Indra and Varuṇa themselves and as standing for upper world and nether world. It is hard not to recognize the importance of these symbols in the light of what the first chapter says about them. It has further been observed that if this conclusion is correct, the *sūtradhāra* who goes between them in all likelihood stands for the totality of the dualistic world, that is, for Brahmā. In that case the normal symbolism of right versus left demands that the *jarjaradhara* went to the right of him, and the *bhṛṅgāradhāra* on his left. If so, the *vandana* (not *pūjā*) of Brahmā was a confirmation of the *sūtradhāra*’s functional identity with the god of the centre. The number of salutations is also meaningful in this connection, because the number three symbolizes the idea of totality. The *sūtradhāra* then hastily rises and carefully performs an ablution, after which he seizes the *jarjara*.

If this is correct, the *sūtradhāra* now entirely personifies the sacred

⁷² See 5.101f. *parivartanam evaṁ syāt tasyā ’nte* [!] *praviśet tataḥ* (102) *caturthakāraḥ puṣpāṇi pragṛhya vidhipūrvakam, yathāvat tena kartavyaṁ pūjanaṁ jarjarasya tu* (103) *kutapasya ca sarvasya sūtradhārasya caiva hi*. The first line is particularly interesting, because its author seems to have considered the *parivartana* ended at the moment of the “fourth man’s” entrance. This would conflict with 5.156 C (150 B), where the *parivartana* apparently is referred to as *caturthakāradattābhīḥ sumanobhir alaṁkṛte* “adorned with flowers given by the fourth man”. Feistel, p. 66f., considers the possibility that this “Zwischenglied” is a later intrusion. For reasons given *sub* 7 it would rather seem a very old and essential part of the ritual, which however got out of use at an early date because its meaning was no longer understood.

⁷³ See the summary in the Proceedings referred to above, fn. 49.

⁷⁴ For references see “The heavenly Bucket”, *India Maior (Congratulatory Volume J. Gonda)*, p. 144ff.

world. He *is* the god of the universe and while holding the world tree upright *in his hand* he represents the cosmic centre. That the *jarjara* had to be erected follows from its function as a cosmic symbol. If so, the use of the term *utthāpana* for the “member” which ends with the seizing of the *jarjara* must be due to the fact that at this moment the erection of the world pillar in the centre of the universe is re-enacted by the *sūtradhāra* with the *jarjara*.

The *sūtradhāra* then takes five steps in the direction of the orchestra (5.85), for reasons which still remain to be explained, and greets the gods of the four quarters. Through this act the relation between the high god in the centre and the other gods is reconfirmed.⁷⁵ The description is interesting (5.95ff.): he first greets Indra in the east, Yama in the south, Varuṇa in the west and Kubera in the north, which is the normal group of Dikpālas. Then, however, he greets with *three* strides (5.99 *tripadaiḥ*, v.l. *tripadyā*) the *three* gods in the centre Rudra (Śiva), Brahmā and Viṣṇu, who are characterized by a “masculine”, a “neuter” and a “feminine” step. All three are gods of the centre and it was seen above that as such they also reside in the three upper joints of the bamboo staff⁷⁶ which functions as the *jarjara*. The gods of the all-embracing totality always come last in the enumeration of the system of classification. It is not stated in the text just how the *sūtradhāra* pays honour to them: whether in the *brāhma maṇḍala*, which properly speaking belongs to Brahmā alone, or in the *jarjara*, which he holds in his hand and in which they all three reside.

This is the end of the *parivartana* (5.101), which apparently owes its name to the salutations to the four quarters. In the light of the interpretation here proposed it is more likely that the *sūtradhāra* remains standing in the centre of the stage, which he personifies, while greeting the gods of the four points of the compass, than that he goes round the stage. The meaning of *parivartana* must then have been “turning-round” (Feistel), not “walking-round” (Ghosh).

So far all acts have concerned the world of the gods only. The “fourth man” who now enters from “outside” without having purified himself obviously belongs to a different world. His only task is to strew flowers as a *pūjā* to the *jarjara*, which has just been erected in the hand of Brahmā/*sūtradhāra*, to the instruments of the orchestra, and lastly to the *sūtradhāra*. It deserves notice that of the two paraphernalia which the

⁷⁵ See 5.92 *calitaiḥ pādavinīyāsair vandyād devān* [probably corrupt for *vandyā devā*, so 5.90 B] *yathādīśam*, 95 *tato 'bhivādanam kuryād devatānām yathādīśam*, although 5.92, 93, 94 are lacking in some editions. See, e.g. 5.91ff. KM.

⁷⁶ See above fn. 54 and for the *veṇu* (bamboo) from which the *jarjara* is fashioned the notes 64 and 65.

assistants have brought with them on the stage, only the *jarjara* is an object of *pūjā*. This is not, because the golden pitcher as an emblem of the nether world (better known under the name *kalāśa* or *kumbha*) was less sacred,⁷⁷ but because in this particular ritual all attention was concentrated upon the newly erected *dhvaja*. That Abhinavagupta in the eleventh century A.D. no longer understood the meaning of this episode of the "fourth man" may be inferred from the purely etymological explanation with which he contents himself.⁷⁸

The man who enters this divine world apparently represents the world of human beings. His first act is to worship the erected *jarjara*, just as men every year worshipped Indra's banner when it was erected again. It seems to me that we here touch upon the basic meaning of the *utthāpana* in the *pūrvaraṅga*. According to the mythical tale told in the first chapter the first dramatic performance took place in the world of the gods on the occasion of Indra's banner festival. The importance of this "legend" is that it preserves not a historical but a religious tradition. It formulates the ideal norm for a dramatic performance. The *Nāṭyaśāstra* tells us that there was an old tradition about the first drama having been the Amṛta-manthana, accordingly a re-enactment of the cosmogony. On the other hand, Indra's banner was erected "at the end of the year" (according to the *Mahābhārata*) and it is not surprising that at that time a representation of the cosmogony should have been performed. Later on, dramas came to be performed at other festivals, too, but the ideal norm was observed by inserting a miniature banner festival into the *pūrvaraṅga*. To that end a man was needed to confirm the sacred function of the *jarjara* and to demonstrate by his *pūjā* that the *dhvajamaha* was celebrated on the stage. Besides, the *jarjara*, as a *vajra*, kept off the demons.

It can also be understood that his *pūjā* to the *sūtradhāra* meant the decisive confirmation that the latter impersonated god Brahmā. The *stobhas*, which at this moment replaced the normal song, underlined by their "magical" character the religious importance of the fourth man's act. It is not surprising that immediately after this "confirmation" the *sūtradhāra*, as the All-Father himself, pronounces the benediction by which he blesses the earth, the king, the brahmins and cows, etc. The benediction is accompanied by "amen" (*evam astu*) pronounced by the two representatives of heaven and earth, who confirm its effectiveness. A comparison

⁷⁷ As has been remarked above, the identity of this golden pitcher with the pitcher which was Varuṇa's present to the actors is stressed by Abhinavagupta. See n. 49.

⁷⁸ Cf. I², p. 235 line 8: *sūtradhārasya pāripāśvīkayoś ca tisraḥ kriyāḥ, tadvyatiriktam ca caturtham karma karoti 'ti caturthakārah.*

with the prayer pronounced after the *pūjā* to the *jarjara* in 3.11-13 is instructive. There are similarities but in the latter passage a man is praying, whereas in the benediction it is the god who is thought of as speaking and blessing the world (35.96 *sarvaṁ stauti hi lokam*).

This, it seems to me, was the meaning of the *utthāpana*. The explanation leaves at least two questions open. First, the five steps of the *sūtradhāra* in the direction of the orchestra, and the “fourth man’s” *pūjā* to it, remain unexplained. If the structural approach on which the preceding interpretation is based has any merit, it is certainly this that it shows the gaps in the theory which need being filled. That divine honours were paid to the instruments (or perhaps the musicians) of the orchestra is unquestionable but the meaning of this *pūjā* is not yet clear. In view, however, of the great parallelism between the consecration of a new playhouse as described in Chapter Three and the ritual of the *pūrvaraṅga* (which in point of fact is a consecration of the stage) attention may be drawn to the following stanza:

3.11 C *saṁpūjya devatāḥ sarvāḥ kutapaṁ *saṁprapūjya ca
jarjarāya prayuñjita pūjāṁ nāṭyaprasiddhaye*

3.12 B, 11 KM *sampūjya sarvāṁ ekatra kutapaṁ samprayujya ca
jarjarāya prayuñjita pūjāṁ nāṭyaprasiddhaye*

Of the two readings *devatāḥ* and *ekatra*, one seems to be a corruption of the other. If *devatāḥ* is correct, *saṁprapūjya* has a fairly good chance of also being the correct reading. Ghosh gives it as a conjectural emendation in his edition of the text (C²), but it is in fact the reading of two manuscripts used for the second edition of Baroda and it had been adopted in KM¹. Although *saṁprapūjayati* is rare (the *PW* records only one occurrence from the *Harivaṁśa*), *prapūjayati* is not uncommon and prefixation of *saṁ-* for metrical purposes is well known. In the light of the *pūjā* offered by the *caturthakāra* it would be attractive to translate “After offering *pūjā* to all deities and to the orchestra he should offer it to the *jarjara*”. Modern practices can no doubt deepen our insight into what the old text actually means. Jones’s recent observation about the worship of the copper drum (Tamil *muḷavu*, Sanskrit *mṛdaṅga*) in Kerala, which the Cākyār consider a *brahmacārin* and which they decorate accordingly,⁷⁹ shows what enlightenment can be expected from this side. Abhinavagupta,

⁷⁹ See Clifford R. Jones, “Source Materials for the Construction of the *Nāṭyamaṇḍapa* in the *Śilparatna* and the *Tantrasamuccaya Śilpa Bhāgaṁ*, *JAOS*, 93 (1973), pp. 286-296, especially p. 295 n. 29. Raghavan’s study “The Multifaced Drum” on the *pañca-mukhavādyā*, there referred to, was inaccessible to me. Cf. 1.84 *bhāṇḍe sarve divaukaśaḥ* “In the musical instruments are all gods” and G. L. Hart, *JAOS*, 94 (1974), p. 159.

however, read *ekatra*, which is the sole condition on which *saṁprayujya* could be maintained, as *kutapaṁ saṁprayujya* would not make sense. From the lapidary style of his commentary the exact text of the manuscript he had in hand cannot be reconstructed.⁸⁰

The second point that must be left an open question is the terminology of “the seizing of the *jarjara*” (*jarjaragrahāṇa*). The term *may* suggest that that this had a brutal, aggressive character. The crucial moment in the cosmogony, when Indra “propped up” the sky and, by separating heaven and earth, created the dualistic cosmos, was an episode in his strife with the Asuras. The *sūtradhāra* seizes the *jarjara* from his assistant who, as the bearer of Indra’s emblem, has been explained as standing for Indra himself. If the *sūtradhāra* actually grabs it, this might represent a re-enactment of the element of strife that accompanied the first *utthāpana* of the cosmogonical myth. In any case, however, the consecration of the *jarjara* on the stage is performed by the *sūtradhāra* as representing the highest god.

8. After this digression, which was only meant to show how the many details can fit into a meaningful pattern, the following “members” of the *pūrvaraṅga* will be briefly examined.

After the *pūjā* offered by the “fourth man” a new *dhruvā* introduces the *nāndī* “benediction” (5.105-115) already referred to. The next *śuṣkā-vakṣṣā dhruvā* forms the transition to another important episode. This *dhruvā* is called *jarjaraśloka-darśikā*, which name, although not entirely clear,⁸¹ obviously refers to the following *aṅga*. It is followed by the praise

⁸⁰ The manuscripts apparently read: *ekatre 'ti: sthaṇḍilabhūbhāge. kutapaṁ iti: caturvidhātodyabhāṇḍāni. ekatra niveśanaṁ jarjarasya pūjārtham avasthāpanam āryeṇa nivasanniyam iti bhāve kṛtyaḥ*. In the second edition of Baroda the last words are emended to *avasthāpanam. nivasaty upāsyam iti bhāve kṛtyaḥ*. Instead of it, the end of the passage should rather be read as follows: *ekatra niveśanaṁ, jarjarasya pūjārtham avasthāpanam, sūtradhāreṇa “nivasanti 'mam” iti bhāve, kṛtyam*, the translation of the whole passage then being “*ekatra*: on an open, bare piece of ground; *kutapaṁ*: the four kinds of musical instruments [viz. *tata*, *avanaddha*, *ghana* and *suṣira*]. The *sūtradhāra* must put [all gods] in one place, that is, array them [in the *jarjara*] for the purpose of the *pūjā* to the *jarjara*, because they can be considered to reside in it.” For the act of *niveśana* cf., e.g., 3.20 *kāryaṁ devatānām niveśanam* (thus 3.21 B, but *daivatānām* C). In no case should this be taken as an argument that the *jarjara* was put down during the *Utthāpana* of the *pūrvaraṅga*. On the whole Abhinavagupta’s interpretation of *ekatra ... saṁprayujya* seems rather forced, but from a text-critical point of view the question of the original reading of this verse must be left open. As for the *niveśana*, if actually referring to the *jarjara*, a parallel is met with in the belief that the sacrificial stake belonged to all deities, who resided in various parts of it: *TS. VI.3.4.7 sā vā eṣa sarvadevatyō yād yūpo, yād yūpam minōti sārva eva devātāḥ prīṇāti*. Cf. *ŚB. IV.4.10* and n. 43.

⁸¹ Abhinavagupta I², p. 238 lines 2-3 explains it as follows: *jarjarastutiśloko yataḥ sūtradhāreṇa paṭhyate, 'to jayater darśikā tatpurassari 'ty arthaḥ* “that is, because the

(*stotra*, *stava*) of a god who is just then specially worshipped⁸² or of whom the king is a special devotee, or else of the class of brahmins.⁸³ Then the *sūtradhāra* recites with a deep voice the *jarjaraśloka* (5.117-118), which is known as *raṅgadvāra* (?).⁸⁴ This is immediately followed by another *śloka* which accompanies the “inclining” of the *jarjara*. Here it is necessary to quote the text (5.118b-120):

gaditvā jarjaraślokaṃ raṅgadvāre ca yat smṛtam
(119) *paṭhed anyam ślokaṃ jarjarasya vināmanam*
jarjaram namayitvā tu tataś cārīṃ prayojayet
(120) *pāripārśvikayoś ca syāt paścimenā pasarpaṇam*

“After having pronounced⁸⁵ the *śloka* [in praise] of the *jarjara* and what is taught [as to be pronounced] in the *raṅgadvāra* (?),⁸⁶ [the *sūtradhāra*] recites another *śloka*, which accompanies the inclining of the *jarjara*. Having inclined the *jarjara* he thereupon performs a *Cārī* and the two assistants retreat backwards.”

Since Haraprasad Shastri⁸⁷ already rightly interpreted this as “at the end of this another verse is to be recited for dismissing the *jarjara* and laying it down”, it is curious that Konow should have misunderstood these words as meaning “Der *sūtradhāra* ... verbeugt sich vor dem Banner des Indra.”⁸⁸ The word *vināmana* only means “inclining”⁸⁹ and the

sūtradhāra utters the *śloka* which contains a praise of the *jarjara*, therefore it is called ‘pointing ahead to the praise of the *jarjara*’, that is, preceding it.” For *jayater*, which makes no sense, I read *ja[rjarastu]ter*, cf. 5.26 KM *jarjaraślokaḍarśikā* (-tā C) and see for *jarjarastuti* Sāgaranandin 1130-31; *darśikā* is “introducing” (“einführt” Feistel, p. 70).

⁸² See 5.117-118. It is interesting that Abhinavagupta (I^a, p. 238 line 6) mentions as a possible case that the drama is performed at the beginning of a festival for a special god: *yām devatām uddiśyo ’tsavādau nāṭyam kṛtaṃ sā tatra stotavyā*.

⁸³ For 5.118 C *brahmaṇastavaḥ* (= *brahmaṇas stavaḥ*), 5.114 B *brahmaṇas stavam* (also Feistel 5.111) the manuscript *a* of the Baroda edition reads *brāhmaṇastavam*, cf. 5.116 KM *brāhmaṇastavam*. This reading is apparently corrupt, although it occurs in Abhinavagupta’s commentary: *sa* [viz. *prekṣāpatiś*] *ced udāsīnas tarhi brāhmaṇa[h] ayam asau* “If the sponsor of the play has no preference, this or that brahmin.”

⁸⁴ If the reading *raṅgadvāram iti smṛtam* (two manuscripts, followed by Feistel) is correct. For the *raṅgadvāra* cf. 5.14, 27, 53 and below, p. 265. All editions read *raṅgadvāre* (B C KM Raghuvārśa).

⁸⁵ For this word cf. 33.227+ (p. 175 line 3 C) *jarjara[śloka]niga[da]nam*. The corresponding words of this extremely corrupt part of this chapter are lacking in KM, p. 641.

⁸⁶ “in what is called the *Rangadvāra*”, Ghosh (but *ca*?). See above. n. 84.

⁸⁷ See *JRASB*, 5 (1909), p. 357.

⁸⁸ *Das indische Drama* (1920), p. 24.

⁸⁹ Cf., e.g., *NŚ*. 25.109 B *śīraso ’tha vināmanam*, 25.111 KM *śīrasaś ca vināmanāt* (26.113 C has a different reading), 13.174 C *daśīṇam vinamet pārśvam* and Abhinavagupta I^a, p. 101 line 9, who quotes from Kohala *vinamanam* “moving down”.

correctness of this reading cannot reasonably be doubted.⁹⁰ Up to this moment the *sūtradhāra* must have held the *jarjara* upright in his hand. The same is prescribed for the Indra pole, viz. that it should stand upright which is, indeed, symbolic of life.⁹¹ There can be no doubt, therefore, that after the *jarjaraśloka* the *jarjara* should incline. The double worship of the staff, first by the “fourth man” and now by the *sūtradhāra* himself, has given rise to wrong conclusions.⁹² It is, however, characteristic of the *indradhvaja* that the highest honour is paid to it immediately before it is pulled down.⁹³ The importance of this second *jarjaraśloka* is indicated by the name of the *dhruvā* which introduces it and marks it as a separate “member” of the *pūrvaraṅga*. The only difference between the *indradhvaja* and the *jarjara* is that the first, which is actually pulled down, is said to

⁹⁰ 5.115 B, 117 KM *jarjarasya vināśanam, jarjaraṁ namayitvā tu*. The correct reading occurs in a manuscript of the Palace Library, Trivandrum.

⁹¹ In *IIJ*, 4, p. 232, an attempt has been made to prove that the expression *ūrdhvā sthā-* in the R̥gveda symbolizes life versus death (for which parallels can be found in Ancient Egypt). For the *indradhvaja* the vertical position is also prescribed, with the exception of *VarBS.* 42.60 *arinagare natāgraṁ kāraved dviḍvadhāya* “one should make the top incline towards the town of one’s enemy, to kill the adversary”, In spite of this magical practice the *indradhvaja* is worshipped when it “stands up” (*utthita*, *VarBS.* 42.67, etc.) and in a mantra it is addressed with the word *uttiṣṭha* (*Viṣṇudharmottara* II.157.4), which may be compared with *RS.* III.61.3 *ūrdhvā tiṣṭhasya amṛtasya ketūḥ* “thou [Uṣas] standest erect as the symbol of life”, IV.6.1 *ūrdhvā ... agne tiṣṭha* “stand upright, O Agni”. Quite different from the magic of the *VarBS.* is the Vedic practice of making the *yūpa* incline towards the East, e.g., *SB.* IV.4.17 *prācīm namaty* [so to be read for *saṁnamaty* Eelsingh] *etad vai Viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padam* “he makes it incline towards the East” (not “he turns,” Gonda, *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism*, p. 94, Bollée, translation, p. 99). This is parallel to the prescription that the sacrificial ground should be sloping towards the East or North(-East), cf. *MS.* III.8.4 (94,4), *SB.* II.10.20, *SB.* III.1.1.2, Caland, ad *ĀpSS.* X.20.1. However, also with the *yūpa* magic may be performed, cf. *KS.* XXVI.6 (129.8) *agner ardhād upanataṁ yūpasya kuryād, bahiṣṭān nirṇatam; agner vā ardhād upanatena yajamānāya lokam karoti, bahiṣṭān nirṇatena bhrātr̥vyaṁ yajñān nirṇudate* (otherwise *MS.* III.9.4: 118,10).

⁹² Feistel, p. 112, writes “Diese Preisung lässt die in 5.100 sq. erwähnte Jarjaraverehrung überflüssig erscheinen” and suggests expunging the whole passage of the *caturthakāra* (5.101b-104b C) as a later interpolation.

⁹³ Cf. *Viṣṇudharmottara* II.155.25-26 *saṁpūjayed Rāma tadā dinacatuṣṭayaṁ, pañcame divase prāpte ś(a)kraketuṁ visarjayet* (26) *pūjayitvā mahābhāga balena caturāṅgiṇā* “nachdem er sie zusammen mit seinem vierteiligen Heer (noch besonders) verehrt hat” (J. J. Meyer), *VarBS.* 42.67 *dinacatuṣṭayam utthitam arcitaṁ samabhipūjya nṛpo 'hani pañcame, prakṛtibhiḥ saha lakṣma visarjayed balabhidahḥ sabalābhivṛddhaye*, Hemādri, *Caturvargacintāmaṇi* II.2, p. 402 *ghāte pāte kuryād ucchrāyaṇe yādṛśī pūjā*, Domuhacariyam (Jacobi, *Ausgewählte Erzählungen in Māhārāṣṭrī*, p. 40 line 22f.) *āgayā puṇṇimā. pūṇo mahāvicchadḍeṇa kusumavatthāhiṇiṁ Domuharāṇā indakeū. mahātūraraveṇa annammi diṇe paḍio meṇiṇe*.

be “loosened from its props”,⁹⁴ to “fall”,⁹⁵ to be “dismissed”⁹⁶ or to “sit down”,⁹⁷ whereas the movements of the *jarjara* in the hand of the *sūtradhāra* only symbolically imitate its erection and pulling down.

The inclining of the *jarjara* is obviously parallel to the *visarga* of the *indrādhvaja*. *Visarjana* is the common word for the desecration of images of gods. Consequently, from this moment onwards the *jarjara* must not, even for a single moment, be erected again. It has ceased to be a sacred object.

9. As we have seen above, the two assistants “retreat backwards” to the back of the stage, where they remain standing, their faces turned to the audience. The words *paścimenā pasarpaṇam* have caused some difficulties and have led to a misinterpretation, which will be discussed in an Excursus. They are, however, entirely unequivocal.

The *sūtradhāra* now performs a *Cārī*-dance alone and after assuming the *avahittha* posture he places his left arm, with the palm of the hand turned downwards, and the *jarjara*, which he holds in a horizontal position, near his navel.⁹⁸ This direction seems to imply that he now holds the *jarjara* in his left hand, perhaps from the moment of desecration. The *avahittha sthāna* is said to be a posture of women⁹⁹ and since in a later passage of this chapter this *Cārī* is referred to as a reiteration of the dance which Śiva (Maheśvara) in the beginning (or, formerly) danced with

⁹⁴ Cf. *Mhbh.* VII.68.25 *yantranirmuktabandhaḥ*, *Rām.* IV.17.2 crit. ed. *apatad devarājasya muktaraśmir iva dhvajah*, VI.45.11 *dhvajāv iva mahendrasya rajjumuktau prakampitau*.

⁹⁵ See *Mhbh.* I.162.2 *kṣitau nipatitam*, *Rām.* IV.17.2 crit. ed. *apatad devarājasya muktaraśmir iva dhvajah*, Yājñavalkya I.147 *Śakrapāte*, Hemādri, *Caturvargac.* II,2, p. 402 *ghāte pāte ... rātrau śubhakṛt patanam*, III,2, p. 756 *śakradhvajaprapatane*, p. 912 *taṭpātaś ca bharanyām syān ... Domuhacariam* (ad. Jacobi) line 24 *paḍio*, 25 *nivaḍio*, 29 *paḍantaḥ*. Cf. *Rām.* IV.16.27 crit. ed. *vibhramśitendradhvajavat*, II.71.9 crit. ed. *utthāpyamānaḥ Śakrasya yantradhvaja iva cyutaḥ*.

⁹⁶ *VarBS.* 42.67, *Viṣṇudharmottara* II.155.25 *visarjayet*, *VarBS.* 42.56 *visarga-*, Hemādri III,2, p. 908 *paratra sthāpayec Chakraṁ kanyāyām tu visarjayet*, p. 911 *Śakram utthāpayen nṛpa bharanyām antapāde ca niśi supte visarjayet*, p. 912 *taṭpātaś ca bharanyām syān navamyām āśvinasya tu, arcayitvā bhagavatīm tataḥ sadyo visarjayet*.

⁹⁷ Hemādri quotes from Garga the lines *uttīṣṭhate vividhamandiravṛndabandho, yāmyām tato niśi niśidati vajrapāṇiḥ*.

⁹⁸ See 5.124 *kṛtvā 'vahitthaṁ sthānaṁ tu vāmaṁ cā 'dhomukhaṁ bhujam, nābhipradeśe vinyasya jarjaraṁ ca tulādṛtam*. It should be observed that the wording of these lines has a stereotyped character, cf. 13.171f. (12.133f. KM) *kṛtvā 'vahitthaṁ sthānaṁ tu vāmaṁ cā 'dhomukhaṁ karam nābhipradeśe vinyasya savyaṁ ca khaṭakāmukham*, 13.183 (12.143 KM) *sthānaṁ kṛtvā 'vahitthaṁ ca vāmaṁ cā 'dhomukhaṁ bhujam, nābhipradeśe vinyasya savyaṁ ca khaṭakāmukham*.

⁹⁹ See Abhinavagupta I², p. 240 line *avahitthaṁ strīṇāṁ sthānakam*.

Umā,¹⁰⁰ it is natural that Umā should especially be pleased at the performance of this dance.¹⁰¹

As for the direction “near the navel” (*nābhipradeśe*), it is reminiscent of the Vedic Aśvamedha sacrifice, in which the sacrificer, seated on a “throne-seat” after his consecration, is lifted up knee-high, then navel-high, then as high as the mouth.¹⁰² Jeannine Auboyer rightly explains this as “une prise de possession de l’univers”.¹⁰³ If the inclining (*vināmana*) of the *jarjara* has been interpreted correctly as a symbolical imitation of the pulling down of the *indrādhvaja*, then the horizontal position¹⁰⁴ must indicate its lying on the earth and the navel can be symbolic of the earth, as intermediate between nether world and heaven. Abhinavagupta has, if I am not mistaken, been misled by purely auditive associations and seems to have misinterpreted the passage.¹⁰⁵

After the *Cārī* the *sūtradhāra* performs a *parivartana* “turning-round” (cf. 5.101), with the *jarjara* in his (left?) hand, recites two *śloka*s and then also retreats “backwards” (v.l.: “with his face towards the audience”). He thus joins the assistants and hands the *jarjara* [no doubt still in a horizontal position, although this is not stated] over to one assistant [that is, the *jarjaradhara*].¹⁰⁶ Here again a few words must be said about the text. All editions (5.127 C, 124 B, 126 KM) read *haste (tu) nyasya jarjaram uttamam*. The last word is also an epithet of the *indrādhvaja* in 1.69 (*dhvajam uttamam*) and in *Viṣṇudharmottara* II.154.13. Two manuscripts of B², however, have the obviously corrupt reading *unnatam*. The circumstance that one of these manuscripts is from North India, whereas the other composite source is based on South Indian manuscripts presents

¹⁰⁰ Cf. 5.122-123 *yathā pūrvam Maheśvaraḥ, saho ’mayā kṛṇīṭavān*. Abhinavagupta interprets this as follows (ad 5.119 B): *sahomaye ’ti: śṛṅgārasya pracaraṇāt* [“with movements depicting the erotic sentiment”, cf. 5.27], “*Umā tuṣṭā*” *iti cokatatvād* [quotation from 5.54] *iti bhāvaḥ. kṛṇīṭavān: striceṣṭitene ’ti bhāvaḥ*.

¹⁰¹ See 5.54 *tathā cāryām prayuktāyām Umā tuṣṭā bhaved iha*.

¹⁰² See P.-E. Dumont, *L’Aśvamedha* (1927), p. 236.

¹⁰³ See Jeannine Auboyer, *Le trône et son symbolisme dans l’Inde ancienne* (1949), p. 140. Cf. also the comment of *SB*. XII.8.3.20-21.

¹⁰⁴ The reading *tulādhr̥tam* “kept in balance” is perfectly clear. There is no reason to read *talādhr̥tam* instead of it (see Ghosh, Translation, p. 92 n. 2).

¹⁰⁵ The formal similarity of this verse with 13.172 and 183 (see above, n. 98) led Abhinavagupta to explain *nābhideśe* as a reference to the *khaṭakāmukha* gait of women. Cf. I², p. 240 line 9 *khaṭakāmukhamadhye strigatau hi vakṣyate* “*nābhipradeśe vinyasya savyam ca khaṭakāmukham*” *iti*. I doubt if there is any connection, but cf. Feistel, p. 75 “die das Tragen eines langen Stockes repräsentiert”. The umbilical region is also mentioned in different contexts, e.g., 13.174 *nyasen nābhīṭate tataḥ*.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. 5.127 *pāripārśvikahaste tu nyasya jarjaram uttamam* (B KM Raghuvaiṣṇa). C has the reading of the manuscripts *ḍa* and *ma pāripārśvakayor haste* (like the edition of the Kashi Sanskrit Series), which is impossible.

a curious palaeographical puzzle, since *tta* can be misread as *nna* in some forms of Devanagari as well as in Malayalam script. Anyway, *unnata* “lifted up, raised” is ritually impossible. Feistel, p. 77, renders it by “wieder erhoben” and diffidently suggests reading *uttatam* “hochgestreckt”. It is not quite clear why there should be any need for emending *unnatam* which, taken by itself, is impeccable in the sense of *ucchrita*, whereas *uttatam* is improbable in classical Sanskrit for purely philological reasons.¹⁰⁷ Be that as it may, this emendation had to be mentioned because Feistel, although rightly translating on p. 77 “den ausgezeichneten Jarjara”, on p. 116f, silently accepts his conjecture as the basis for his conclusion: “doch bleibt er ... stets in der Hand, zeitweilig des einen Begleiters, zeitweilig in der des *Sūtradhāra* selbst, der mit ihm Bewegungen ausführt, ihn senkt und wieder aufrichtet” [italics mine]. This is incorrect.

Since at the moment when the *sūtradhāra* returned the *jarjara* to his assistant he must symbolically have represented the *visarga* (“dismissing”) of the *indradhvaja* it is interesting that the *Nāṭyaśāstra* elsewhere uses the term *jarjaramokṣa*. As *mokṣa* can be used in the sense of *mocana* “release, etc.”, this was apparently the technical term for this act of the *sūtradhāra*. It occurs in a description of the professional evaluation of the quality of the performance. See 27.40 C:

*jarjaramokṣasyā 'nte nālikasiddhiś ca lekhyasiddhiś ca
kartavyā tv iha satataṁ nāṭye 'smin prāśnikaiḥ samyak*¹⁰⁸

Ghosh, although reading *antar* for *ante* in his text, still translates: “After the putting down of the Jarjara [by the Director] in a dramatic production the Assessors (*prāśnika*) should always achieve in due manner the accuracy of timing and of recording [of Blemishes as well as good points].” From this verse Abhinavagupta infers that the performance of the *pūrvaraṅga* was also an object of the critical evaluation by the “judges”.¹⁰⁹ This can only be understood if he (rightly) took *jarjaramokṣa*

¹⁰⁷ According to the *PW* it is only attested in the *Atharvaveda* (*ASSaun.* II.7.3, VII.95.3, *Paipp.* XX.29.3). The meaning assigned to it is in classical Sanskrit expressed by *ucchrita*, *udyata*, *unnata*, *utkṣipta*, *uddhṛta*, etc.

¹⁰⁸ Other editions have (27.41 B, 39 KM) *jarjaramokṣasyā 'nte siddher mokṣas tu nālikāyās tu, kartavyas tv iha satataṁ nāṭyajñaiḥ prāśnikair vidhinā*, KSS (quoted after KM, footnote) *jarjaramokṣasyā 'ntanālikasiddhiś ca lekhyasiddhiś ca, kartavyaṁ tv iha satataṁ nāṭye 'smi(n) prāśnikaiḥ samyak*. C reads *nālika*.

¹⁰⁹ Abhinavagupta III, p. 317 line 7 “*jarjaramokṣasyā 'nta*” iti: *pūrvaraṅgaprayogo 'pi parīkṣya iti darśayati*.

as referring to the "dismissing" of the bamboo staff. The author of *NŚ.* 27.40, accordingly, excluded all acting up to this point (the *raṅgadvāra*, see n.84), as belonging to religion and lying outside the sphere of dramatic performance, from being judged by aesthetic standards.

10. What occurs after this episode, interesting though it is for our insight into the nature of the *pūrvaraṅga*, is of minor importance for the subject under discussion. The *sūtradhāra* comes again to the front of the *raṅga* and calls his assistants. It has been argued elsewhere that the ensuing *Trigata* between the two assistants, one of whom is now called *vidūṣaka*, is a replica of the Vedic verbal contest between Indra and Varuṇa (*RS.* IV.42) and that the *bhṛṅgāradhāra*, as the personification of Varuṇa, here acts as the *vidūṣaka*.¹¹⁰ This identity is also expressed by his traditional make-up, which largely corresponds to that of the Vedic *jumbakā*. The other assistant, however, is the rational participant in this *saṃjalpa* (5.140).

However that may be, the only (and last) point which is of interest in the context of this study is that the assistants, when coming back to the front of the stage, can no longer have carried their paraphernalia with them. It is generally assumed, and rightly so, that they have all the time remained on the stage because the text does not make mention of their exit and because they are present at the back when the *sūtradhāra* joins them. On the other hand, when one of the assistants comes back as the *vidūṣaka*, he must have been recognizable as such. In view of our complete ignorance about Indian stage conventions in the period when this passage was written, it is not advisable to draw definite conclusions from this. It deserves notice, however, that immediately after the inclining of the *jarjara* the two assistants had receded to the back of the stage. This *paścimenā 'pasarpaṇam* may possibly have had a threefold function. First, it may have marked a caesura between the preceding worship of the *jarjara*, in which the assistants had a very subordinate part, and the verbal contest, following the desecration of the *jarjara*, in which contest they had to represent the two cosmic moieties under the patronage of the highest god. Second, it may have allowed them somehow to get rid of their paraphernalia for which there was no longer any use: one of them had lost its sacred character, the other was no longer needed for ablutions and their task of marking the different nature of the two assistants was now probably taken over by the make-up of the *vidūṣaka*, who must

¹¹⁰ Contrary to Feistel's guess, p. 120 n.2.

somehow have been distinct from the other assistant.¹¹¹ Third, it may have given the representative of Varuṇa (that is, the one who had carried the golden pitcher) some opportunity to make up as the *vidūṣaka*.

11. Conclusions. This study leads us to the conclusion that former scholars were right in referring the term *utthāpana* to the erection of the *jarjara*, and that Feistel was right, too, in denying that the *jarjara* was actually placed on the stage. What in fact happened was that the *sūtradhāra* performed the *utthāpana*, at the moment when he seized (or took over) the *jarjara* from his assistant, simply by holding it upright in his hand. At this moment he and the *jarjara* formed mythologically the cosmic centre and were worshipped accordingly by a representative of mankind, the "fourth man". Consequently the following drama could be considered to be performed, according to the ideal norm of the myth, on the day of Indra's banner festival, conform to the legendary first performance.

As a result of its inclining, however, the *jarjara* was desecrated and could no longer remain on the stage. The fact that the text does not say a word about its removal, although it was necessary to get rid of it, may perhaps have been due to a religious taboo. There are also some texts which forbade the king to see the removal of the *indrādhvaja* after it had been pulled down. In any case, the circumstance that the assistants were at the back of the stage gave them the opportunity to remove the two *upakaraṇas* in an inconspicuous way.

EXCURSUS on *paścimenā 'pasarpaṇam*

Ghosh translates 5.120 *pāripārśvakayoś ca syāt paścimenā 'pasarpaṇam* by "the two Assistants should step backwards." Feistel, p. 72, gives a different interpretation: "Und [unmittelbar davor] sollen die beiden Begleiter sich nach Westen zurückziehen", to which he adds the following explanation: "Auf der Bühne also in Richtung auf den Zuschauerraum bzw. die ihm zugewandte Bühnenrampe." Since he further rightly paraphrases *apasarpaṇam* by "sich in ehrerbietiger Weise von jemandem zurückziehen, und zwar rückwärtsgehend", he assumes (p. 79) that the two assistants recede to the front of the stage and there remain standing with their backs turned to the audience.

The text itself gives no indication as to which interpretation is correct,

¹¹¹ Cf. 27.8 *śilpakṛtam*, 35.25 KM. *chedavibhūṣitavadana* ("the face made up with stripes"), Abhinavagupta I² p. 219 line 8 *vidūṣakaveśabhāṣācāra*, comm. ad *Nāṭya-darpaṇa* III.105 *vidūṣakaveśadhāri* and see in general G. K. Bhat, *The Vidūṣaka* (Ahmedabad, 1959), p. 48ff. and Sāgaranandin 2169 f.

as *paścimena* is used in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* both in the sense “backwards” and “westwards”.¹¹² So the question arises in which direction the Indian playhouse was oriented. Feistel implicitly assumes that the stage was orientated towards the East, Konow, p. 4, also without further comment, assumed an orientation towards the South and Subba Rao towards the West.¹¹³ I have not found an explicit discussion of this point in the modern studies of the Indian theatre that were accessible to me.¹¹⁴

The key to the problem is the arrangement of the orchestra. A general rule is given in *NS*. 14.11 “What direction the drum and the entry to the dressing-room are facing, that is in the dramatical performance to be considered the East”.¹¹⁵ A more detailed description is given in the very corrupt text of 34.297+ (p. 640 line 10) *KM*², which is complemented and corrected by 33.221+ (p. 172 line 13) *C*¹ and by Abhinavagupta’s quotations ad 5.17 *kutapasya tu vinyāsaḥ* (ed. Baroda I², p. 212 line 1). The orchestra was facing three different directions, cf. Abhinavagupta (p. 214 line 8) *raṅgapīṭhasya tisṛṣu diḥṣu kutapavinyāsāt*. It formed a square that was open towards the audience. The drummers (*avanaddhakutapa*) were sitting between the two doors that gave entry to the dressing-room,¹¹⁶ facing the audience and the East. To the South of the open square the singer was sitting with the *veṇu*- and the *vaṃśa*-players. They were facing the North where, opposite them, the female singers were sitting.¹¹⁷ Therefore, even if one would translate *paścimena* by “westwards”, this

¹¹² Cf. on the one hand 2.35 *paścime punar bhāge* (*paścime ca vibhāge B*) “the rearmost division” Subba Rao, Baroda ed. I², p. 434 (cf. Ghosh), which is equivalent to 2.34 *prsthataḥ* (Mankad’s interpretation, *Ancient Indian Theatre*, p. 31 is excluded). Cf. *paścimena* “behind” (*Lāṭyāyana*) and *Mhbh.* IV.61.4 *paścimataḥ* “from behind”. On the other hand the word is in current use in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* as a designation of the West, cf. 2.40 *paścimena*, 2.74 *paścime*, 2.48 *paścimottare*.

¹¹³ See D. Subba Rao’s reconstruction of the plan of the theatre in the Baroda edition I² (G.O.S. XXXVI, 1956), Appendix, pp. 434, 439. The same is implied in Clifford R. Jones’s recent paper in *JAOS*, 93 (1973), p. 295.

¹¹⁴ Cf., e.g., V. Raghavan, “Theatre Architecture in Ancient India” in *The Theatre of the Hindus* (1955), p. 156ff. (reprinted from *Triveni* 1931, pp. 69-77), D. R. Mankad, *Ancient Indian Theatre* (1950).

¹¹⁵ *yatomukhaṃ bhaved bhāṇḍaṃ dvāraṃ nepathyakasya ca, sā mantavyā tu diḥ pūrvā nāṭyayogena nītyaśaḥ*.

¹¹⁶ Cf. 14.2 (13.2 *KM*) *ye nepathyagṛhadvāre mayā pūrvam prakīrtite, tayoṛ bhāṇḍasya vinyāso madhye kāryaḥ prayoktṛbhiḥ*. This does not refer to the whole orchestra (*kutapa*) but only to the drums. In its general sense (Sāgaranandin 2177) *bhāṇḍa* is used in 32.459 (409 *KM*) *sthāpīte bhāṇḍavinyāse trisānni parikīrtite, āśrāvaṇakam kartavyam bahirgītaprayogakam*, where Ghosh indeed translates “instruments of music”. The place of the *mṛdaṅga* in the modern theatre in Kerala is still the same, see Jones, *JAOS*, 93, p. 295.

¹¹⁷ See 33.221+ *C*. I here give the text as I think it should be corrected, without further comment: *tatro ’paviṣṭe prāṇmukhe raṅge kutapavinyāsaḥ kartavyaḥ. tatra*

would involve “into the rear part of the stage”. That, however, the implication is “to step backwards” (as Ghosh translates) is probable, also on account of the variant reading in 5.127 C *tair eva ca padaiḥ kāryaṁ prāṇmukhenā ’pasarpaṇam* (for *paścimenā ’pasarpaṇam*) “he should with his face towards the front (that is, the audience) withdraw with the steps described before”. Abhinavagupta (I², p. 239 line 5) explains 5.120 B as follows: *prāṇmukhāṁ eva prṣṭhanivṛttibhiḥ padaiḥ pāripārśvikāṁ apasarpetām ity anena kevalasūtradhāraprayojyamānās cārimahācāryaḥ sūcitāḥ* “(the stage direction) that the assistants should withdraw backwards with the face turned forward implies that the *sūtradhāra* performs alone the *Cāris* and *Mahācāris* [plural!]”.

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[Note. An additional argument in favour of the interpretation of the *utthāpana* given above may be the hand gesture described in 9.78 for representing “Indra's rising” (*Śakrasya abhyutthāna*), viz. by holding the hand close to the forehead.]

pūrvoktayoḥ [14.2!] *nepathyagrhadvārayor madhye kutapavinyāsaḥ kāryaḥ. tatra raṅgābhimukho maurajikaḥ, tasya [dakṣiṇataḥ] pāṇaviko, dardariko vāmataḥ. eṣa prathamam avanānaddhakutapavinyāsa uktāḥ. tatro ’ttarābhimukho gāyanaḥ, gāyanasya vāmapārśve vaiṇikaḥ, tasya dakṣiṇe vaṁśavādakau. gāyanābhimukhyo gāyikā iti kutapavinyāsaḥ.* With this passage cf. Abhinavagupta, l.c.: “*kutapasya tv*” iti: *nepathyagrhadvārayor madhye pūrvābhimukho mārdaṅgikaḥ, tasya <dakṣiṇataḥ> pāṇikau* [read *pāṇaviko*], <*dardariko*> *vāmataḥ. raṅgapīṭhasya dakṣiṇataḥ, uttarābhimukho gāyanaḥ. asyā ’gre, uttarato, dakṣiṇābhimukhasthitā gāyikyāḥ. asya vāme vaiṇikaḥ, anyatra vaṁśadvārakāv* [read *vaṁśavādakāv*, not *vaṁśadhārakāv* B², nor *vaṁśakārikāv*, Mankad, p. 34] *iti.* Cf. also Abhinavagupta I², p. 241 line 3 *bhāṇḍonmukhena: paśet-mābhimukhena.* As for the first words *tatro ’paviṣṭe prāṇmukhe raṅge*, which Ghosh translates “[The members of] the Orchestra should be seated on the stage with their face to the east”, I think they mean “When the audience is seated looking forward [towards the stage]”.

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Note:-

p. 51 line 12—for p. 142 read p. 46; p. 51 n.71 line 2—for p. 151 read p. 55; p. 52 line 19—for p. 139 read p. 43; p. 52 n.76—for p. 140 read p. 44; p. 54 line 28—for p. 145 read p. 49; p. 55 line 5—for p. 147 read p. 51; p. 64 line 4—for p. 99 read p. 59; p. 74 line 1—for p. 108 read p. 68; p. 82 line 14—for p. 109 read p. 69; p. 141 fourth line from bottom—for p. 144 n.1, read p. 138 n.1; p. 142 line 2—for p. 145 n.3, read p. 139 n.3; p. 146 line 5—for p. 145 n.2, read p. 139 n.2; p. 185 line 15, for p. 218 read p. 152; p. 186 line 20—for p. 256 read p. 190; p. 189 line 8—for p. 249 read p. 183; p. 191 line 12—for p. 221 read p. 155; p. 206 line 5—for p. 278 read p. 212; p. 211 line 8—for p. 253, 258, read p. 187, 192; p. 214 line 13—for p. 253 read p. 187; p. 219 line 20—for p. 95 read p. 226; p. 225, tenth line from bottom—for p. 86 read p. 217; p. 227 line 16, for p. 88 read p. 219; p. 227 n.8 line 1—for p. 85 read p. 216; p. 235 n. 33—for p. 264 read p. 253, p. 249 n. 82,— for p. 265 read p. 254.